

Requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®



Ragnarok!

Tales of the Norse Gods



Avalanche Press LTD

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Tales of the Norse Gods

An Adventure Module for High Level Characters

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Introduction

- The Myth of Ragnarok
- What You Need to Play
- Using this Product
- The Roles of Gods
- Historical Myth

Part 1: The Race of Lesser Gods

- In the Beginning. . .
- Divine Abilities
- Alignment and Gender
- Considerations
- Outfitting the Character
- Equipment Restrictions
- The Lesser Races

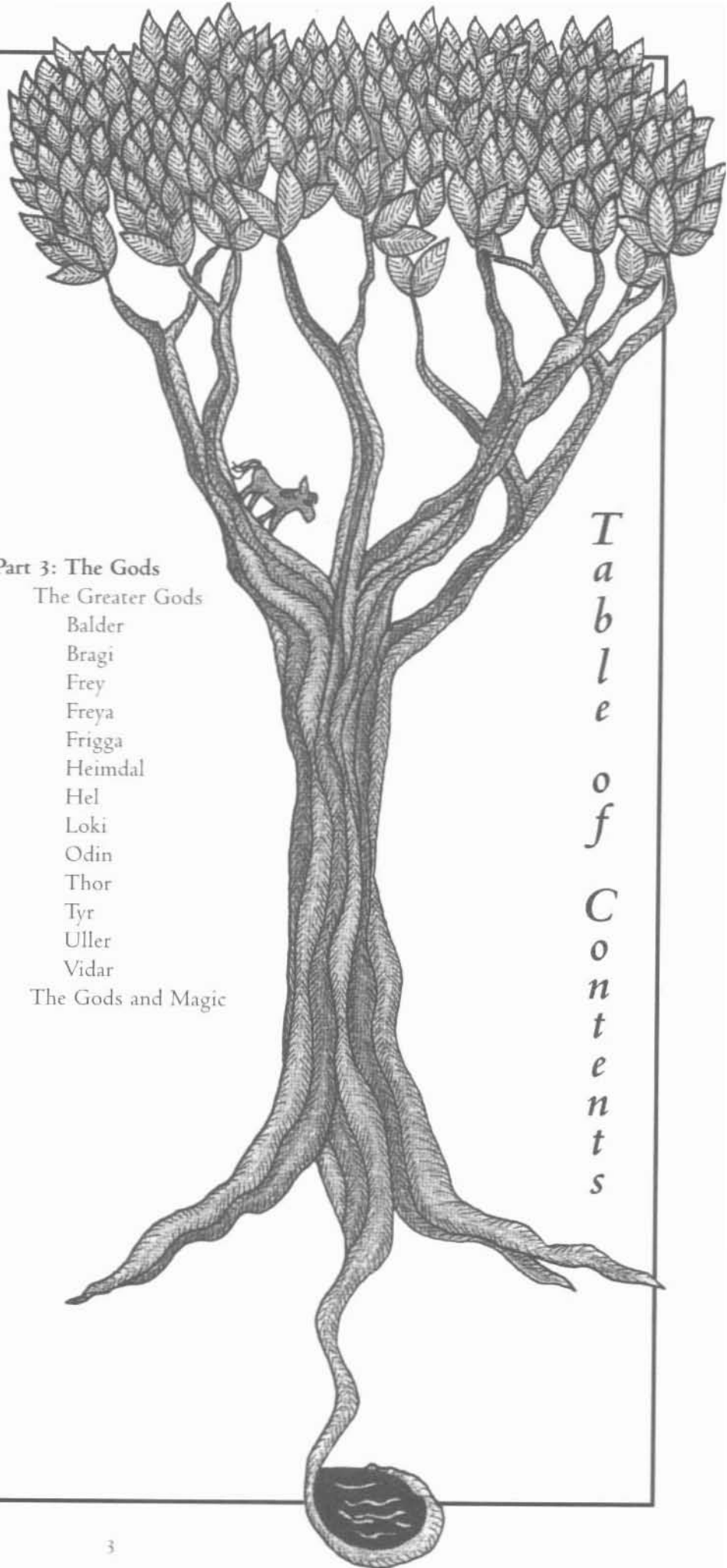
Part 2: The Campaign

- History
 - Myth and Reality
 - Weapons and Warfare
 - Norse Naval Capabilities
 - Berserker Women
 - Religion
 - The Coming of Christianity
- The Worlds of Yggdrasil
 - Alfheim and Svartalfheim
 - Nidavellir
 - Jotunheim and Muspelheim
 - Nifleheim
 - Asgard and Vanaheim
- Midgard
 - The Northern Kingdom
 - The Western Kingdom
 - The Middle Kingdom
 - The Eastern Kingdom
 - The Southern Kingdom
 - The Islands
- Running a Campaign
 - Getting Started
 - Fate Points
 - Divinity Points
 - Awarding Experience
- Designing Adventures
 - Monsters
- Quest Seeds
 - Battle of Wits
 - Fire at Upsala
 - The Monsters of Svartalfheim
 - The Theft of Heidrun

Part 3: The Gods

- The Greater Gods
 - Balder
 - Bragi
 - Frey
 - Freya
 - Frigga
 - Heimdall
 - Hel
 - Loki
 - Odin
 - Thor
 - Tyr
 - Uller
 - Vidar
- The Gods and Magic

Table of Contents





Introduction

The Myth of Ragnarok

This is the vision that Odin has seen. He does not understand all that it means, but he does know that it foretells the Doom of the Gods.

Following the death of noble Balder, brought about by Loki's jealousy, the seams of Order come unstitched. Despite the vigilance of Heimdal at the Gate of Asgard, a surprise attack made possible by great magic is launched by an alliance between the black-hearted Jotuns and the forces of Hel. When the Guardian of Bifrost shakes off his daze and reaches for his great horn to sound the alarm, he finds Loki, the Deceiver, instead. The two fight a great battle that eventually becomes a wrestling match. Both gods give their all but fall, their hearts bursting with the strain.

In the meantime, Odin has gathered the host and leads the Valkyries into battle as the rest of the gods and heroes follow. Odin makes for the Fenris Wolf, now grown so large he seems able to swallow the sun itself. The All-Father casts his mighty spear to no avail as the great hound devours him and his winged horse. Vidar arrives to avenge his father by slaying the beast, which collapses into the swirling melee, killing many more.

Tyr and the Hound of Hel, Garm, meet and slay one another. Thor at last comes face to face with the vile Midgard Serpent. His mighty hammer kills the abomination, but his victory is short-lived. Engulfed by the poisonous breath of the worm, he staggers back nine steps and dies. Frey confronts the mighty Fire Giant, Surt, and is slain as the fiend unleashes great magic that sets fire to all. The conflagration becomes universal and all the worlds of Yggdrasil are burned. The combatants not felled in battle are consumed in flames.

Yet the fires burn both ways, and evil passes from the world with the good as Midgard sinks beneath the waves. Somehow, two humans have survived, hidden in a deep cave at the base of the Tree of Life. They will repopulate the New World. A few of the gods have also survived, and Balder returns from the depths of Niflheim to lead them in the brighter future that lies ahead.

And yet, all this is the stuff of vision. It has yet to come to pass. It is possible that it may be prevented. Perhaps the fatal days of Ragnarok need not arrive. Thus are all gods and their minions tasked with preventing the End of Days. And should they fail, let them at least leave the field of battle with courage in their hearts.

What You Need to Play

Ragnarok is a campaign setting for the d20 System. It is not a complete game in its own right. A good working knowledge of the Nordic Mythos is highly recommended, though not required. This product includes enough material to get players started.

Using This Product

Ragnarok is based on the myths of the Norse people, commonly known as the Vikings. The game setting is a land of myth with a little real-world historical information added. The High Skald runs the game, designing heroic



quests and adventures for the players to complete through their characters. The players (ideally three or four) take the roles of lesser gods and goddesses from the Norse pantheon, questing and performing heroic deeds worthy of a saga, in order to forestall the "Doom of the Gods" known as Ragnarok.

The Roles of Gods

Despite their taking the roles of gods in the campaign, players may find the concept of deities radically changed from other fantasy role-playing games. In the past, gods have been portrayed as hideously powerful and, thus, of little use in an RPG campaign. Most often, the supplements in which they were featured were little more than reference works for the GM. In Ragnarok, however, the gods are simply high-level characters who are quite powerful but not invincible. The adventures created by the High Skald are therefore high-level affairs. Mortal races are present mostly as non-player characters (NPCs). Optionally, the High Skald can allow for adventuring with mortal characters, but such adventuring is indicative of lackeys being sent on missions that the gods are too busy to complete themselves.

With the player characters at already high levels, the campaign setting takes on a different feel than what players may be used to. Accumulating experience points and enriching themselves is not the primary goal as it is in most campaigns. In addition to experience, each completed scenario is scored on a point system as detailed later in these rules. Players must fulfill their quests or risk bringing about the gods' Fatal Destiny: Ragnarok. This titanic struggle is essentially one of Law against Chaos. Good and evil have little to do with it. The gods themselves are quite human in nature and often do not act according to modern standards of what is good or evil. What they do represent, on a cosmic scale, is order in the universe, and it is the fate of that order that rests on the shoulders of the players' characters.

Historical Myth

Despite sharing the mythical nature of most fantasy role-playing settings, Ragnarok has a "real world" equivalent that gives it perspective and makes it recognizable to those of an historical frame of mind. The setting is

The High Skald

The High Skald is the person who runs the game. He or she creates the adventures in which the players' characters participate. Other fantasy RPGs have used the term "game master" to describe this person.

So why, "High Skald?" Skalds were ancient Scandinavian poets, particularly from the so-called "Viking Period." It was these poets who are responsible for what we know about the Norse Mythos. It therefore seemed both appropriate and poetic to pay homage to their work by labeling the GM as a skald. The term, "High Skald," is meant to invoke images of the game master as the ultimate storyteller.

best viewed as "historical myth," wherein the mythological elements of it are introduced into a milieu reflective of the historical period in which they held the greatest sway. Thus, the technology available in Ragnarok is roughly equivalent to that of the "Dark Ages" of European history (approximately the 9th and 10th Centuries). Consequently, a list appears in "Part 1: Character" making changes to the standard list of available equipment.

In addition to alterations in equipment availability, other changes are made in the structure of the game, which are noted throughout the text of Ragnarok where appropriate. In all cases, changes were made to properly emulate Norse culture and belief during the 9th and 10th Centuries.

The Trollborn

The Trollborn are called so due to their large frames and ugly countenances, but whether the name is accurate is matter of some debate. They are not now the offspring of Trolls and humans. They are their own race, breeding among themselves. To have a Trollborn baby, two adult Trollborn have to mate.

It is the origins of the race itself wherein the mystery lies. At some time in the distant past there may have been a union between a Troll and a human that created the first of the species. But it is just as likely that they are cousins to humanity. The Norse had no understanding of evolution, but the relationship between the races is best understood by seeing the Trollborn as an evolutionary precursor to humankind. They are more advanced than, say, Neanderthals, but they aren't quite to the level of *homo sapiens*.

In general, the Trollborn are not well accepted by most human cultures on Midgard. They are ugly and savage in a way that makes them repulsive to humanity. For the most part, they live in small tribal communities of their own, set apart from major human colonies. They trade with their human cousins when they can, join them when they are allowed, and war with them when they must.

Sadly, fully 50% of the Trollborn are sterile. Thus, they are a dying race in an apocalyptic age. With each death, it seems more likely that the memory of them will be wiped from the Nine Worlds forever.



Part 1: The Race of Lesser Gods

This section of the rules deals with creating characters appropriate to the Ragnarok setting. All of this section (Part 1) should be considered Open Content for license purposes, not simply that in the Norse-pattern sidebars (as is the case for the rest of this book). Information on the gods themselves is located in Part 3. Players and Skalds should refer to that section when choosing a patron deity for their Divine Portfolios (see below).

In the Beginning . . .

Players begin the campaign by spending quality time with the High Skald. The player and High Skald must agree on a Divine Portfolio, which will be based around one of the Greater Gods of Asgard (see "Part 3: The Gods"). For example, Trisha chooses Freya, the Goddess of Love and War (not an oxymoron to the Norse), as her main deity. Trisha will occasionally get to play this Greater Goddess in high-level adventures, but, for the most part, Lady Freya will be busy doing other things (turning heads, bashing heads, etc.) A player may not choose Odin to be the foundation for his or her Divine Portfolio. This great figure of Western myth, religion, and history is the sole province of the High Skald.

The next character in the portfolio represents a Lesser God heretofore lost in the mists of time and is the primary character for the player in the campaign. This god is restricted to choosing a Class as dictated by the patron god's attributes (for more on Character Class, see below). Thus, in our example, Trisha would have to choose a Class dictated by Freya's attributes.



Add 10 to each Ability Score for a Lesser God. These should never start at less than 20 or greater than 24. Each Greater God also has a favored Ability. A Lesser God aligned with the deity should not have a score in that Ability less than 21. Once the player has selected the patron god for his or her Divine Portfolio, he or she consults the deity's listing in Part 3 to determine which Ability is favored. Add 14 to each Ability Score for Greater Gods. These should never start at less than 24 or greater than 28, while their favored one begins at 25.

Race is not a concern for gods. They are divine and, by their very nature, greater than mortals. In short, they are high-level beings who are more powerful than the mere mortals who walk the Earth. They do, however, receive the extra Feat bonus, four extra Skill Points, and a base move of 30' that standard humans receive.

The patron deity in the Divine Portfolio determines a Lesser God's Class. The new character must be of the same Class as the patron. So in our example, Trisha has chosen to play a Lesser God aligned with Freya. Consulting Freya's entry in Part 3, she sees that the goddess is a 12th Level Fighter and 6th Level Bard. Thus, Trisha must choose either a Fighter or a Bard (or a multiclass Fighter/Bard).

The starting level is somewhat at the discretion of the High Skald, but it cannot be equal to that of the patron deity. So Trisha's character could begin the campaign as an 11th Level Fighter or a 5th Level Bard. If she chose to make her a multiclass Fighter/Bard, her character could start with as many as 16 levels so long as she didn't exceed 11th Level as Fighter or 5th Level as a Bard.

What level at which the character actually begins is at the discretion of the High Skald. He or she is encouraged to make sure all characters are roughly the same level at the start of the campaign. Mid-level characters (between 5th and 8th Level) are generally a good place to begin. As a result, multiclass characters are not encouraged at the start of a campaign since they would be of lower Level per Class and therefore not really in the realm of gods.

Keep in mind that, since the characters are starting at mid-level, they should have the Skill Points, Feats, and wealth necessary to buy equipment appropriate to their level. More information on this can be found in Feats and Equipment below.

New Class Skill: Hurl Axe

In some Nordic societies, missile weapons are frowned upon as "unmanly." However, short-ranged weapons that can be both hurled and used in melee are acceptable. The more adept warriors in some cultures learned to hurl even larger weapons effectively; a battleaxe being the most popular because it can be balanced with two blades for this purpose.

A Barbarian character (only) acquires the ability, Hurl Axe, as a Class Feature upon reaching 3rd Level. This ability enables the Barbarian to throw a handaxe or a battleaxe as if it were a throwing axe. It has a 10-foot range increment and does not otherwise modify the larger axe's values.

The Paladin and martial artist Monk have no equivalent in this setting and are therefore not available as Character Class choices. Monks exist (in the Southern and Western Kingdoms) as Western monastic characters and could have been any of the other classes before joining a monastery. Balder is the only Paladin in Norse mythology.

Additionally, Druids only come from the Islands. They cannot be from any of the other kingdoms of Midgard (see Part 2: The Campaign). Conversely, there are no Clerics from the Islands. Players who chose to create Cleric characters of the Lesser Races must have them come from one of the five kingdoms. Because most characters of the Lesser Races come from the Northern Kingdom, players should check with their Skald before choosing one of these Classes to see what restrictions may be in effect.

Gods start with a number of Feats commensurate with their Class Level, plus one. Ragnarok features two new Feats characters can purchase, "Weapon-Catching" and "Throwing Spear."



New Skill: Charioteering (Dex)

In the isolated island of Erin, chariots, though useless for war, are still used in sport and spectacle. A character with this Skill is capable of driving a chariot pulled by two light horses. A DC is not required for normal riding but may be needed for extraordinary actions such as:

Event	Difficulty Check
Turning sharply at high speed	5 or 10
Driving over rough terrain	10
Jumping chariot over low obstacle	15
Passenger fighting from chariot	10
Driver fighting from moving chariot	15
(chariot may only move straight at current speed)	

Charioteering is a Class Skill for Fighters, Clerics, and Rogues. It is a non-Class Skill for all others.

New Skill: Runecraft (Int)

This is the knowledge of the Runes. It can only be taken by divine characters and is considered a Class Skill for all of them. Mortals may have knowledge of the Runes, but they cannot benefit from the specialized knowledge that the gods have as represented by this Skill. Runecraft works in all respects the same as Spellcraft except that it pertains to Runic magic, not spells. Spellcraft does not grant any understanding of the Runes and vice versa.

Divine Abilities

In addition to other traits, all gods have certain natural abilities that set them beyond mortals. Divine characters have each of the Special Abilities listed below, all of which are Extraordinary except for Magic Item, which acts as a standard piece of equipment.

Plane Travel - Once per day, a god can travel to one of the Nine Worlds (see "Part 2: The Campaign"). The worlds are connected to Yggdrasil in various ways. A great sea separates Asgard and the giants' land of Jotunheim, for example, and the famous Rainbow Bridge connects Asgard and Midgard, the land of mortals. Travel is not necessarily instantaneous and itself may be an adventure.

Inspire - Gods inspire their mortal worshippers. If a mortal who acknowledges the gods is within visual range of the character (and is aware he or she is divine), the mortal is treated as though he or she is one level higher than is actually the case. Roll a temporary hit die for the character, but he or she does not gain additional Skill Points or Feats. The effect lasts so long as the god is in the character's presence. Once the god leaves, the character's level returns to normal.

Spell Resistance - Lesser Gods have Spell Resistance of 10. For Greater Gods, the number is 15.

Cast Runes - Lesser Gods can cast two Runes per day. Greater Gods can cast three Runes. A god begins play with a number of Runes equal to his or her Level. For more information on the Runes and how to cast them, see the Runic Magic centerfold.

Fearless - Gods are immune to the effects of Fear.

Stout - Gods are tough characters. Consequently, they always generate at least half the total number of points available per Hit Die when generating Hit Points.

Damage Reduction - Lesser Gods have a DR of 5/+1. For Greater Gods, it's 10/+2.

Ignore Damage Reduction - At the same time, gods are less affected by creatures with Damage Reduction than are mortals. A Lesser God can harm any creature with a DR of +2 or less as though he or she had an appropriate magical weapon. For Greater Gods, creatures with a DR of +4 or less can be normally damaged.

Rapid Healing - Lesser Gods Heal at twice the normal rate; Greater Gods three times the normal rate.



Limited Immortality - Before the Last Battle of Ragnarok, the Gods are effectively immortal unless they are killed on Asgard or Vanaheim. Gods "killed" elsewhere awaken the next day in their divine abode. The death of a player character god scores negative points in the campaign (see Part 2). Characters reduced to -10 Hit Points or less are considered dead for the purpose of determining Fate Point penalties.

Magic Item - Lesser God player characters begin the game with one magic item chosen by the High Skald. Magic items are rare and precious things in the mythos so great care should be taken in making the choice. Skalds are encouraged to solicit players' requests for the item in question, but the final decision belongs to the High Skald. If a weapon is chosen, it should not have a bonus of more than +2. Non-weapon items are just as appropriate, though. For example, magical boots are quite fitting for a minion of Uller, the God of Winter and Hunting. Skalds may choose to create a unique item but should remember to keep it in balance with the rest of the campaign. Most of the Greater Gods have magic already detailed (see Part 3), but for any who don't, feel free to assign items slightly more powerful than those allowed to the Lesser Gods. For more information on beginning magic items see "Outfitting the Character" below.

Improved Armor Class - Lesser Gods' base AC is 12. For Greater Gods, the base is 15. Armor, Dexterity, and other bonuses can, of course, modify these bases.

Linguistics - Gods can speak and understand any language.

Divinity Points - Divinity Points allow a god to change the results of any one die roll that would affect him or her. Thus, a successful roll can be made to fail and vice versa. Hits can be made to be critical hits, and the same is true of misses turning to a critical miss if the party is using such rules. Divinity Points may only be spent once per quest, and, once they are used, they're gone.

Lesser Gods begin the campaign with one to three Divinity Points (roll a six-sided die and divide the result by two). When a Lesser God uses his or her last Divinity Point, he or she has no more. Greater Gods always have one Divinity Point to spend. Since they can only be spent once per quest, it doesn't matter how many the deity actually has.

New Feat: Weapon-Catching [General]

Prerequisites - Shield Proficiency; Dex 12+

Benefit - This Feat, which can only be used to effect with a wooden shield, enables the warrior to catch an enemy's weapon (slashing or piercing weapons only) in the shield's rim. If the opponent rolls an unmodified "1" on his or her attack roll, the defender has caught the weapon, the blade being buried in the wood. The defender can choose to discard the shield as a partial action, thereby disarming the attacker. Additionally, the opponent is thrown off balance and suffers -1 to his or her Initiative for the next round. If the defender does not spend the partial action to immediately discard the shield, the attacker can wrench the weapon free. Regardless, if the Weapon-Catching Feat is employed there is a chance that the shield may be ruined in the action. Roll a d20 and add the attacker's Strength Bonus to the result. If the number generated is 20 or more, the shield is ruined.

The above rules assume the use of a large shield. If the character is using a small shield, Weapon-Catching can be employed on an opponent's unmodified attack roll of 1 or 2.

Alignment and Gender Considerations

Whether the players are controlling a mortal minion or a Lesser God they represent "the good guys" for purposes of cosmic balance. Hence, players may not choose Evil Alignments.

Similarly, for better or worse, the world of the 9th and 10th Centuries is male-dominated. While players may choose to play female characters, no party may be made up of more females than males, particularly amongst the Lesser Races. The sole exception to this would be if the players were all playing Valkyries.

New Feat: Weapon Expertise: Throwing Spear [General]

Prerequisite - Proficient with Shortsword; Dex 12+; Weapon Focus: Shortsword

Benefit - The spear was the most common weapon of the age since it was useful for both melee and ranged attacks. Skill in its use was highly desirable, and some warriors became masters. A character with this Feat can throw two shortspears in the same round so long as his or her off-hand is free. However, there are some limitations. Both throws lose 15 feet per range increment, and the second throw does not receive the +1 bonus to the attack roll normally conferred by Weapon Focus.

Table 1-1: Starting Wealth

Character Level	Wealth
2nd	500 gp
3rd	1400 gp
4th	3000 gp
5th	5000 gp
6th	7000 gp
7th	10,000 gp
8th	15,000 gp
9th	18,000 gp
10th	25,000 gp
11th	35,000 gp
12th	45,000 gp
13th+	+10,000 gp per Level

Outfitting the Character

Starting characters begin with an amount of gold shown on "Table 1-1: Starting Wealth." First Level characters roll for their starting funds normally. Divine characters should use the available funds to purchase the starting magic item assigned them by the High Skald in addition to any other equipment they may wish to have. Given the rarity of magic in the game world, characters from the Lesser Races may not start with a magic item. Lesser Gods may purchase a second item only with the permission of the Skald. If he or she forbids it, it doesn't matter how much money the character has available. The character can't purchase the item.

Equipment Restrictions

In addition to the limitation on magic items, some items on the standard equipment list are not available due to the Dark Ages period of the setting. "Table 1-2: Prohibited Equipment" lists the items that may not be purchased.

Any remaining equipment may be purchased normally. Characters may also buy a chariot for 100 gold pieces.

The Lesser Races

If the High Skald chooses, he or she can allow the players to create members of the Lesser Races that populate the campaign. However, such characters always populate the lowest end of a player's Divine Portfolio.

The Lesser Races are Dwarves, Elves, Humans, and the Trollborn. Of these, Human and Trollborn are available as player characters. Dwarves and Elves are only encountered as NPCs. To generate Ability Scores for these races, follow the standard rules for character generation. Humans, Dwarves, and Elves all have their usual racial abilities. Trollborn are treated as half-orcs.

Unless the High Skald chooses otherwise, assume that all mortal characters rolled up for play come from the Northern Kingdom (see Part 2: The Campaign). The Northern Kingdom is ideal for the turbulent world of Midgard since both the Aesir and Vanir (classifications of gods; for more, see Part 2) are worshipped equally, corresponding to the Viking culture of our own history.



Part 2: The Campaign

This part of the rules details the campaign world. It begins with the mythic history of the Norse people to set the stage and then delves into the specifics of running a Ragnarok campaign.

History

What follows is an historical overview of the Norse people, their culture, and the influence of the gods they worshipped.

Myth and Reality

Everyone knows something about the Norse people, if only due to the exposure to what is known as "pop culture." The danger of pop history, however, is that it is often in error and perpetrates misconceptions. Norse legends and culture are often misunderstood. For example, Vikings wearing horned helmets is a common misconception. Only one archaeological dig from the Vendel period (circa 700 CE) reveals the use of horned helmets, and this is apparently of ritual religious significance not military usage.

The name, "Viking," is itself a misnomer and rarely used outside Scandinavia. In written Scandinavian literature, "Viking" denotes going on a raid or act of piracy; hence the occasional reference to someone having "gone a Viking." Northmen or Norsemen were how most outsiders

Table 1-2: Prohibited Equipment

<i>Adventuring Gear</i>	<i>Martial Weapons</i>
Block and Tackle	- Melee
Ink and Pen	Glaive
Lantern (Any)	Guisarme
Paper	Halberd
Oil	Lance (Heavy)
Spyglass	Rapier
<i>Class Tools</i>	Ranseur
& Skill Kits	Scimitar (Available in the Eastern Kingdom only)
Alchemist's Lab	
Hourglass	<i>Martial Weapons</i>
Magnifying Glass	- Ranged
Water Clock	Composite
<i>Clothing</i>	Longbow
Courtier's Outfit	<i>Exotic Weapons</i>
Monk's Outfit	- Melee
<i>Mounts & Related Gear</i>	Dire Flail
Barding (any)	Hammer (Gnome, Hooked)
Heavy Warhorse	Kama (Any)
Saddle (Military)	Kukri
<i>Armor</i>	Nunchacka (Any)
Armor Spikes	Orc Double Axe
Banded Mail	Siangham (Any)
Full Plate	Urgrosh
Half Plate	<i>Exotic Weapons</i>
Locked Gauntlet	- Ranged
Shield (Tower)	Crossbow (Any)
Splint Mail	Shuriken
<i>Simple Weapons</i>	
- Ranged	
Crossbow (Any)	

described them. The "Vikings" certainly thought of themselves as Danes, Swedes, or Norwegians depending on where they lived. Ragnarok uses Northmen as "official" because the Northern Kingdom within its pages is the one that best mirrors Dark Ages Scandinavia.



Another common misconception regarding Vikings is that they were bloodthirsty raiders. Certainly, raiding was a part of their martial prowess, but they were also traders and colonizers. In fact, they did so with much greater regularity than raiding. Viking trade routes reached the New World in a quest for furs and Baghdad for silks and spices. The legacy they left in the lands they visited was much more than bloodshed, and places like Ireland were transformed by the colonists who settled down and mingled with the native populations. (See the GREENLAND SAGA supplement from Avalanche Press for more on the fate of one of these colonies.)

The wherefore and the why of their sudden appearance on the international scene (the first recorded encounter being 789 CE) is a bit more open to question. Certainly the increased opportunities afforded them due to centralized European governments stabilizing mercantile development in the West (the Carolingian Empire being the prime example) gave rise to both trade and piracy. Finally, their neighbors had something worth stealing. The colonization impulse seems to have been due to a massive population explosion in the 7th and 8th Centuries.

Weapons and Warfare

Despite their prowess in both colonization and trade, the Norse were great fighters. Indeed, the stereotype of the barbaric Viking warrior fits many a classic image present in fantasy literature and role-playing games. As usual, an element of truth exists within the popular conception. The Norse fought with more discipline than is often credited them. Coupled with a culture that stressed individual bravery and feats of courage, they became a formidable foe who dominated Western European battlefields for nearly 300 years.

Their most common battle formation was a solid phalanx of infantry, often aptly called a shield wall. The men were tightly packed, shields somewhat overlapping to afford protection against an initial charge. The better-armed and armored men were to the front. Once battle was joined, they pushed into the enemy ranks to create room for a solid axe or sword hack. Thus, the formation opened up after the initial contact unlike the old Greek pike phalanx or even the Roman legionary formation.

The shield wall could also be formed in a circular fashion, though this was almost exclusively done for defensive

purposes. Archers would be stationed at the center to rain death upon approaching foes. Commanders would sometimes lead from the center of such formations set up around them.

Another commonly used formation was the "swine-array," a type of flying wedge that was used more offensively. Two men would form the point, three more took the second rank, four worked the third position, and so on. According to legend, Odin himself instituted this formation, which displayed its antiquity. It is essentially a flying wedge as employed by the ancient Germans, last seen in Gaius Marius' lifetime and reflects the strong Teutonic roots that the old Germans shared with the Norsemen of the Dark Ages.

Cavalry was rarely used in large numbers since the extra room taken up by horses on ships meant less space for men and loot. However, some English chronicles describe Norse horsemen in a few battles. They would have primarily been used for scouting and extra mobility with the men dismounting to fight in a fashion similar to King Harold's elite Saxon Housecarls.

Norse Naval Capabilities

The Norse were great sailors, and many battles that were fought amongst them were contrived to be fought on sea, not land. That is, just like the Romans, the sea battles were fought as if they were land engagements. Ramming was not commonly employed, nor was the old tactic of shearing off oars. Any maneuver was designed to bring about boarding actions. As the ships closed bows, javelins and rocks were employed to cause casualties and disrupt an enemy's approach. Shields were used extensively to defend against such actions, and the popular image of shields lining the sides of ships is not without justification. As sails were furled and battles fought under oar, shield men were specifically designated to protect the vulnerable oarsmen. As the ships came alongside, heavy rocks were dropped in great numbers on an enemy, and a ship with higher prow therefore had a distinct advantage. Rocks were quite useful for breaking shields, arms, and even damaging the wooden ships themselves.

It was common for ships to be lashed together to create stable battle lines. This was a cumbersome formation to move, but it gave the commander a stable platform to lead the troops once the battle was joined. Faster ships



were used as skirmishers and to bring reinforcements to critical points along the battle line.

While the Viking Long Ship or Dragon Ship is well known, the heavier Knorr is also worth mentioning. It was primarily used for trading due to its large cargo capacity, but that same advantage made it an excellent warship since it had a greater capacity for carrying troops.

Sail and oar were the means of propulsion for Norse ships, and the two means were alternated as need dictated. The most common ships seem to have had 13-18 pairs of rowing benches, though ships with both more and less have been uncovered. Some had as many as 30 pairs of benches, and King Harald Hardrada's Great Dragon had 35. The Gokstad ship (circa 900 CE), a typical vessel, was 76 feet long, 17 1/2 feet wide, and had 16 rowing benches for a total of 32 oars. The bow and stern of Norse vessels had raised decks. The mid-section could be covered with tarps to give the crew protection from the harsh elements.

Berserker Women

Compared to the rest of Europe in this time period, when women were seen as the source of Original Sin and treated like property, Norse women were quite liberated. Women were seen as a vital part of society and helped in keeping the social structure from disintegrating into feuds and other upheavals. Stories abound of strong-willed women who are more than simply the power behind the throne. Still, it was mostly a man's world, and the everyday life of a woman definitely consisted of putting up with her man's foolishness. There is one heroine, Hervor, who even has her own saga. So adventuring women, while rare, are not unheard of and are hardly ahistorical for the campaign setting.

The Berserkers are the subject of much literature and even more speculative conjecture. The word actually is derived from a Norse term meaning, "bear shirt." There was also a cult dedicated to the wolf. These warriors, often detailed as a jarl's personal bodyguard, could work themselves up to a great rage just before battle was joined. How this was accomplished isn't fully understood. Stories tell of them biting their own shields in anticipation of battle and wrestling trees afterwards if their battle lust was not satisfied so as not to turn on comrades. More mundane explanations have hinted at the use of narcotics.

Religion

The Norse were one of the last great Pagan peoples of Europe to resist the coming of Christianity. The triumph of the latter was assured under the reign of Saint Olaf, the King of Norway, and completed by the end of the 11th Century. As a result of missionary vitriol, few records of how the Norse worshipped survive. Much is known about their gods, largely due to an Icelandic poet in the 13th Century named Snorri Sturleson, who romanticized his country's history.

The names of the gods are familiar, and they represent Jungian archetypes in a mystical sense. In far less esoteric terms, their influence is still felt today in mundane matters. Days of the week in the English language are based on the old gods. Wednesday is Woden's Day (Woden being the Germanic form of Odin). The Aurora Borealis was said to represent the Valkyries in flight taking dead heroes to their Valhallan reward.

The Norse Gods were a grim lot overall, reflecting the people who worshipped them. The gods struggled in much the same manner as mortals, and, in the end, they would fail since Chaos would be unleashed upon the world at the battle of Ragnarok. Yet they fought the good fight, never giving up while the breath of life still existed within them.

Religion was essentially seen as a personal matter. A priesthood of sorts did exist, and the term, God, was used to describe such a person. Some organized temples existed, notably the Great Hof at Uppsala (in Sweden), destroyed by the Christians in 1100 CE. Sacred sites were common and could be anything from a Runic stone to a simple roadside altar. As in all the old Pagan cultures, blood sacrifices were practiced. Families would often have altars and shrines in their homes dedicated to the gods. Few worshipped only a single god because it was deemed more prudent to placate them all. Worship seems to have been something of a contract, however, and not a mere abasing of one's self before an almighty being. The Norse expected something in return for worship, and it is not uncommon to read in the sagas where a hero might turn his back on the gods out of anger. Devotion was often expressed in a personal way. Icons were used in a fashion similar to the Eastern Orthodox faith with little bronze statues of Odin being common household items. Likewise, warriors often



wore a hammer symbol around their necks like a Catholic would wear a crucifix today (see the GREENLAND SAGA cover for an example).

The Coming of Christianity

Conversion to Christianity was politically motivated at first, and King Olaf had various diabolical ways of getting his jarls to convert. Sometimes they were not effective, as in the case of Raud the Strong. Refusing to renounce the gods of his ancestors, he was rewarded by having a poisonous snake forced into his stomach by way of a large drinking horn shoved in his mouth.

Once the chieftains converted, the people were forced to follow as a matter of course. Everyday life was hardly affected by this because the Norse were a pragmatic people. A Norwegian equivalent to an urban legend tells of one farmer who converted anew each time a different Christian priest passed through his area. He got a new white robe for being baptized and supposedly collected 24 of them over a lifetime.

The conversion had a modifying effect on the old myths. The apocalyptic nature of Ragnarok mirrors that of Armageddon in that a new and better world is promised after the destruction. The Son of God (Odin's boy, that is), Balder, became a more Christ-like figure, who would lead the rebuilt heavens and earth. Parallels between Loki and Lucifer are also easy to see.

The Worlds of Yggdrasil

In the beginning was the primordial chaos. In the turbulent void known as Giunungagap, where the raw ice and fire met and gave off great spurts of steam as the two elements warred with each other, a being slowly formed. This was Ymir, ancestor of the giant race. Over time uncounted, the body of Ymir brought forth children — the first giants, who went forth and multiplied and who had no conception of good and evil.

Once begun, the process of creation continued. The first domestic beast, the great cow, Audumia, nursed Ymir. Thus more giants were born, until, at last, there were some who were not without merit. Two of these, Borr and the giantess, Bestia, gave birth to sons who were not giants but the first gods. They were Odin, Vili, and Ve. The gods were much smaller than the giants but were

of noble bearing, and they had the ability to discern good from evil. Odin was wise and convinced his brothers that they could use the raw stuff of creation to fashion a world. They therefore rose up in rebellion, slew Ymir, and used his massive body to form the heavens and the earth. Many giants perished during this time, drowned by Ymir's blood, but two, Bergelmir and his wife, escaped. Yggdrasil is the Great Ash, the Tree of Life. Its highest branches stretch to the heavens, and its deepest roots extend into the depths of Hel. Its limbs reach out to the Nine Worlds of its branches. Its most prominent boughs extend to Asgard and Jotunheim. At the base of the former is the sacred well tended by Urd (whose name means "Past"), who keeps the tree green by sprinkling holy water from the well itself on its roots. At the root of Jotunheim lies Mimir's Well, where wisdom and knowledge — both good and evil — can be found for those who are willing to pay the price. The foulest root of Yggdrasil goes to Nifleheim from whence comes the foul water of Hvergelmir, the birthplace of evil serpents and monsters.

In Yggdrasil's highest reaches a great and noble eagle perches and watches over the worlds of mortals and gods. Four stags roam its branches, pruning its leaves. At its base the dragon Nidhogg eats at its roots from Nifleheim, and the trouble-making squirrel, Ratatosk, carries messages to all above.

Alfheim and Svartalfheim

Alfheim is the world of the Elves, who are the creation of the god, Frey, and thus enjoy his special protection. Svartalfheim is the land of the Dark Elves, a slightly more malicious variety. Elves are small of stature and very slight, tending to fair skin for regular Elves and dark skin for the Dark Elves. Both varieties are often used as pawns in the struggle between the giants and the gods, a fact the Dark Elves resent considerably.

Elves are chaotic by nature. They have a culture alien to humanity and pursue their own goals, making the few encountered by humans seem odd, indeed. At home, they are ruled by whim. They seem to go from interest to interest with no discernible pattern or connection, dedicating an apparently random amount of time to any given concern. The few mortals who meet them classify them as fickle at best.

The gods know them a little better, being painfully



aware of their magical nature. The magical skills of a long-lived Elf (and they don't die of natural causes) can surpass even that of the gods. Thankfully for the other Lesser Races, their birth rate is very slow. Unfortunately, they do have a tendency to acquire human women and children, usually through unsavory means, for use as mates. Unlike humans, it is a rare Elf who cannot travel between worlds, allowing them to interact with other societies as the individual Elf wills. Elves don't build large cities, choosing instead to congregate in tribal villages. Dark Elves mostly live underground. Nothing resembling an established nobility exists, though Dark Elves of a strong nature can impose their will on others in dictatorial fashion. Otherwise, Elves, if governed at all, hold to decisions by their respective village councils. Both morals (at least by human standards) and nuclear family units are distinctly absent. Children are raised communally and lineage is traced through the mother.

Some famous Elves are Vindalf, a warrior who can ride the winds, Gandalf, a mighty practitioner of magic, and Althjof, a master of thieves. The latter two are Dark Elves. Althjof is more than willing to interact with mortals and teach his skills to all who can pay. Four Dark Elves — Nordi, Sudri, Austri, and Vestri — aid Odin willingly, helping maintain the balance of the worlds.

Nidavellir

Nidavellir is the land of the Dwarves. While Elves at least superficially resemble their typical fantasy counterparts, the Dwarves of Norse myth are quite different from what players may expect. Nidavellir is a bleak place that even the gods avoid if at all possible. Dwarves are secretive and mysterious and anti-social even amongst themselves. Outside the extended family unit, they have no real government. They are reclusive, usually quite ugly, and are generally full of self-pity and loathing for the known universe.

As a general rule, they are not good fighters but are quite adept at magic. In fact, most of the magic found in the Norse universe comes from Dwarven forges. There is no altruism to be found in their love of crafting magical weapons and tools. A Dwarf exacts a high price for the favor of creating a magic item. To cheat a Dwarf is to incur a long-lasting and often

New Races

Elves. Elves may not be of Lawful Alignment.

Dwarves. Living mostly underground, Dwarves suffer a -1 penalty to all die rolls in normal sunlight. Regardless of whether they are Lawful or Chaotic, Neutral or Evil, few Dwarves are of Good Alignment, making dealing with them a risky venture.

Frost Giants. Frost Giants are clever, with most having an Intelligence and Wisdom score in the range of 12-15. Some 25% of all Frost Giants are Sorcerers, ranging up to 10th Level. Standing, on average, 25 feet tall, they're also tough. When creating a Frost Giant for use in the campaign, the High Skald should re-roll any 1's generated on Hit Dice rolls to reflect this.

Fire Giants. Like Frost Giants, the Skald should re-roll any 1's on Hit Dice. Also highly intelligent, Fire Giants typically range between 12 and 16 for their Intelligence scores. One-quarter of them are Wizards who can reach as high as 12th Level. Utgard-Loki, king of the Fire Giants, is a 15th Level Wizard (an illusionist specialist) with an 18 Intelligence.

delayed wrath. A Dwarf will hardly be able to hunt down one who has wronged him, but a potent skill in magic makes the curse of a wronged Dwarf something to fear! Few even among the gods have the courage to attempt to swindle a Dwarf out of his or her fee.

Dwarves are painfully ugly, and some even have crow's feet. They tend to dress rustically and are rarely encountered armed. The Dwarven birth rate is even lower than Elves, and females are scarce. Acquiring a bride is often a major goal for a Dwarf that wishes to interact with the other races, and acquiring one is frequently part of the bargain when negotiating a fee with a

New Monster: Sea Giant

CR: 11; SZ: Huge (Giant); HD: 16d8 + 96 (168 HP); INTE +1; SPD: 50 ft.; AC: 21 (-2 Size, +1 Dex, +12 Natural); ATK: Gargantuan Spear +22/+17/+12 melee or +12/+7/+2 ranged (4d6+18 melee or 4d6+12 ranged); FACE: 10 ft. by 10ft.; REACH: 15 ft.; SA: Tidal Wave; SQ: Amphibious, Underwater Sense; SV: Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +6; ABILITIES: Str 36, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13; AL: Often NE; SKILLS: Climb +10, Jump +8, Listen +10, Spot +10, Swim +12; FEATS: Alertness, Cleave, Greater Cleave, Power Attack

Tidal Wave (Ex) - Due to their large size and affinity with water, Sea Giants have learned to cup their hands and push large amounts of water at their opponents. A giant's Tidal Wave moves at 50 ft per round from the round that it starts and travels up to 400 feet before it breaks. The wave damages whatever it breaks upon, inflicting 3d6+6 points of damage plus an additional 1d6 for every 50 feet it travels beyond the first 50 feet. Thus, a Tidal Wave that breaks 51-100 feet away from the giant would deal 4d6+6 points of damage, one that breaks 101-150 feet away would cause 5d6+6 points of damage, and so on. The Sea Giant can control where the break occurs by making an attack roll against an AC 10. All creatures within 50 feet of the breaker take the damage, though they may make a Reflex Save to take half damage. Tidal Waves that miss their intended target have a 50-50 chance of landing 50 feet short or fifty beyond where they were supposed to go.

Amphibious (Ex) - Sea Giants are equally well at home in the water or on land. They can breathe and move underwater just as if they were on dry land.

Underwater Sense (Ex) - A Sea Giant can locate creatures underwater within a 50-foot radius, negating the effects of poor visibility and invisibility.

10% of all Sea Giants become Sorcerers. These magic-wielders can reach up to 6th Level.

Dwarf. Sometimes captured human mates are released back into human society with startling effects. Most such humans return quite mad, though a few are gifted with magical powers.

Unlike Elves, who have a divine patron, the Dwarves were created by accident from the blood of slain Mimir. This racial memory only serves to darken their already dour personalities. Most Dwarves are quite bitter about the cosmic scheme. A few, however, are outright evil and some even dwell in the outer regions of the lands of Hel.

Some famous Dwarves in the mythos include Andvari, who guards the greatest Dwarven treasure hoard of all. The hoard is cursed, of course, to all who plunder it! Sindri was accounted the finest smith in Nidavellir, and his brother Brokkr the ugliest!

Jotunheim and Muspelheim

These are the lands of the giants (sometimes referred to as, "Jotuns"), eternal and very worthy foes of the gods. Jotunheim is the larger of the two, and is populated by Frost Giants. Muspelheim, surrounded by the dark and dread forest of Mirkwood, is home to the less numerous but far more deadly Fire Giants. Neither realm is for the faint-hearted. Non-divine beings usually end up as a giant's lunch, and even the gods are a bit overwhelmed at times.

The giants were nearly all slain early in the cosmic game by Odin and his brothers, and they have been enemies ever since. This does not prevent them from having dealings with the gods, but it is always for self-gain and not for the common weal that such events transpire. All giants are black-hearted and cunning, seeming to personify the worst traits of humanity. The structure of their society is tribal in nature with a jarl having nominal rule over a certain territory and reporting to the King of the Giants.

Fire Giants are even more worthy foes than Frost Giants. Thankfully, they are not as numerous. They tend to be more centrally organized and lawful, though still tribal in nature. While it can be argued that Frost Giants are better warriors, Fire Giants are undoubtedly better soldiers.

In addition to Frost and Fire Giants, lesser types do exist. Hill Giants are common to both realms and are occasionally found in Midgard (the land of mortals).



They are typically brutish beings, often used as pawns and cannon fodder by true giants (that is, the Frost and Fire Giants).

Sea Giants are very rare. They can breathe air or water equally well and move at the same rate in water as on land (although they rarely have need to). Sea Giants pursue their own goals and keep their own counsel. Like all giants, they are evil, but they are not as malicious as the Frost and Fire Giants.

Sea Giants are larger but more reclusive cousins to the other principal Jotuns, Frost Giants and Fire Giants. They are as black-hearted and evil as other giants, but they have their own agenda and typically keep to themselves. Most Sea Giants live in underwater castles built in the great sea that separates Jotunheim from Asgard, but they can be found throughout the Nine Worlds, including the oceans of Midgard.

Sea Giants prefer to fight with their gargantuan spears, goring their opponents whenever possible. They will also throw the weapons on the rare occasions when they choose to attack at range.

Many Giants are important to the mythos. Thrym is generally acknowledged as a great lord (jarl) among the Frost Giants. Surt is a powerful Fire Giant who is also a great military leader. The nominal King of the Giants is the Fire Giant known as Utgard-Loki.

Nifleheim

Nifleheim, the land of the dead, is not a pleasant place by any standard. It can only be entered through a cave guarded by the Hound of Hel, Garm. Garm attempts to slay all mortals who dare enter the dread realm, although gods are not assaulted, nor are guests of Lady Hel. He can see (and smell) invisible objects, but he is not infallible. A perpetual gloom hangs over the realm like a shroud, and an endless twilight lights the underworld regions. One cannot stay here too long without going mad.

Hel is the ruler of the netherworld and the daughter of Loki. She is both grotesque and beautiful in appearance. Half her body is white and the other half black. She is a great plotter and attempts to further her influence in the world of humanity. Even Odin All-Father respects her power, particularly in her own realm.

Mortal beings can adventure in the outer regions of Nifleheim, and a few brave or foolhardy ones risk the wrath of Garm for rare herbs and other treasures to be found there. There is a place within the underworld, however, that no living being can penetrate: the Halls of the Dead. The dead here await the End of Times far differently than those in Valhalla. When most mortals die, they simply cease to exist, but Hel claims those of noteworthy deeds that do not merit Valhalla. They will form the ranks of her army when the Ragnarok comes. Some wait in somber reminiscence, mimicking their daily lives in loneliness and regret while others suffer in some torment devised by the denizens of the region. These dead are not necessarily evil, and comparisons should not be too freely made to the Christian Hell, which is thought to be a place of punishment, rather than limbo like Nifleheim.

The occasional Dark Elf, Giant or even Dwarf will also sometimes dwell in the outer regions of Nifleheim. These individuals tend to be outcasts even among their own peoples — especially evil members of those races who find themselves in exile — who want to avoid the attentions of the gods they would surely attract if they came to Midgard in force. They are the worst of a bad lot.

Asgard and Vanaheim

These are the realms of the gods. Asgard is home to the fierce Aesir, the scions of Odin. They are the most warlike of the gods, invoking the Viking-like stereotype most commonly associated with the mythos. The Vanir live in Vanaheim and are a more nature-oriented sect of gods that seem more akin to a Celtic motif than Norse. Both lands are beautiful; the sky seems bluer and the grass greener there. However, there is a harshness to the beauty of Asgard much like the beauty of the Norwegian landscape with its fjords and rugged mountainscapes. Vanaheim is softer with lush forests and rolling plains more reminiscent of Sweden.

The Aesir and Vanir fought a bitter conflict with one another in times long ago. This was called the War of the Wanes and ended with both sides exchanging hostages and later forging a firm alliance against all the evils in the universe.

Due to their very nature, the Vanir are more open to mingle with the Lesser Races. Noble Elves and even some

Madness of Nifleheim

Beginning the second day, for every day a mortal spends in Nifleheim, he or she must make a Will Saving Throw beginning at DC 10 and increasing by 5 for every additional day spent in the underworld. Thus, the third day in Nifleheim would force the character to make a Will Saving Throw at 15, the fourth day would be 20, and so on. So long as the character keeps making his or her Saving Throws, there is no adverse effect. However, if the character fails, he or she goes mad as though suffering from the effects of an Insanity Spell cast by a 15th Level Wizard. This effect lasts until it is properly dispelled by a Greater Restoration, Limited Wish, Miracle, or Wish Spell.

Nifleheim is populated by Outsiders. The High Skald may customize the campaign by choosing what sort. Skalds may choose to populate Nifleheim with either Demons or Devils, but not both. This decision should be made at the start of the campaign, and the High Skald should inform the players. These magical beings are often found in Midgard, sent on errands by their mistress as she spins her webs of intrigue and malice across the worlds.

mortal humans can sometimes be found on Vanaheim. The gods who dwell there tend to be individualists and live apart from one another in their primary elements. For example, Njord, the God of the Sea, keeps his main abode underneath the waters. He maintains a court in Vanaheim, however, for feasts and for entertaining guests.

The oft-traveled Bifrost, aptly called the Rainbow Bridge, is the gateway to Asgard and is guarded by the god, Heimdall, the ever-vigilant Sentry of the Gods. He rarely leaves his home by the bridge and needs very little sleep. His brief absences are astride his mighty warhorse, Goldtop. In the event of danger, he sounds

his mighty horn to warn the other gods.

From the Bifrost, the plain of Vigrid stretches to the city in which most of the gods reside surrounded by massive walls and battlements. Here Odin All-Father holds court from his mansion of Gladsheim, both seeking and giving counsel. Odin often is silent, however, and keeps much from the other gods.

Valhalla is the massive Hall of Heroes where the Valkyries bring the noblest of fallen warriors from Midgard to hone their martial skills for the time when they will fight beside the gods at the Final Battle. Daily they fight on the Plain of Ida. Those who are slain return to life in time for the feasting and drinking of much mead that very evening. Half these warriors, the Einheriar, are sworn to the direct service of Odin. The rest serve the goddess, Freya.

Other notable points of interest in Asgard include Thor's massive mansion, Bilskirnir, which has 540 rooms, and Balder's home, Breidablik, where it is said that no unclean thing can enter. Balder's son Forsetti's house, Glitner, is a bit grander with a roof of silver and pillars of gold. Perhaps most precious to the gods is the sacred grove where the goddess, Idun, wife of the poet Bragi, cultivates the golden apples. It is these magical apples that preserve the gods' eternal youth.

Asgard is the land of myth and magic. On the silver roof of Valhalla the great goat Heidrun runs free, eating the branches of the overhanging Tree. Its teats give forth the sacred honey wine, Mead, which is the drink of choice for gods and mortals. The great boar Sæhrimur is cooked every night to feed the warriors and gods and is magically alive the next morning. The roof of Valhalla is made of silver shields, and its rafters are of spears. Shining swords provide light over the tables, and none other is needed. Some 800 heroes are garrisoned there, but the hall can seat as many as come for the evening feasting.

Midgard

Midgard is the realm of mortals and the main setting for the campaign. A separate discussion of its kingdoms with greater detail follows.

There are five main kingdoms in Midgard. They are simply known as the Northern, Western, Middle, Southern, and Eastern Kingdoms. There is also a large island to



the northwest of the mainland that is a separate political entity. Each kingdom has its own language except for the Islands, which speak a debased form of Western. Unlike most fantasy RPGs, there is no "common tongue." Naturally, this isn't a problem for the gods since they can speak and understand any language.

The Northern Kingdom

Geography - The topography of the Northern Kingdom is alternately mountainous with small, fertile valleys in between and flat with large, trackless forests. Open plains are rare outside of areas cleared for farmland. More trees are felled as the years go by, however, to build the ships on which the economy of the Northern Kingdom depends. Regardless of specific geography, the climate of the Northern Kingdom is universally harsh and cold.

The coastline is pockmarked with inlets from the sea, and it is on these that most settlements are founded. The terrain keeps settlements small with only a half dozen recognizable towns being present. Otherwise, people dwell in extended family units that roughly correspond to small villages. The largest towns are the capital, Ozlo, and Trekheim.

Religion - The Northern Kingdom follows the truest path as far as religious beliefs are concerned. Both the Aesir and Vanir are honored in the Northern Kingdom. Thor is the most commonly worshipped deity, followed closely by Odin. Freya is a distant third in sheer number of followers. Clergy are not organized on a national level, and local priests often share time presiding over sacrifices and festivals with regional notables, often the jarl of the area. The big exception is the massive temple at Uppsala. A beautiful building with a roof inlaid with gold, the temple is the center of a literal campus devoted to worship and learning. The clergy here is quite organized with a strict hierarchy. A High Priest of Odin is in charge and holds the office for life.

Culture - A hard and dour people, the Northerners are more suited to war than peace. However, they usually do not fight for sake of combat. The country has little industry and what economy exists is based on fishing and small farms. Hence, the Northern Kingdom relies heavily on trading and raiding to shore up a weak financial situation. The Islands and other coastal regions in other countries are targeted for attempts to open

New Monster: Garm, the Hound of Hel

CR: 12; SZ: L (Magical Beast); HD: 12d8 + 60; HP: 120; INIT: +8 (+4 DEX, +4 Imp. Init.); SPD: 50 feet; AC: 23 (-1 SZ, +4 DEX, +10 Natural); ATK: Bite +12/+7/+2 melee (4d10+5) FACE: 5" by 10'; REACH: 5' SA: Fear Aura DC 16, Trample 2d8+5; SQ: Damage Reduction 15/+2, Scent, SR 12; SV: Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +5; STR 20, DEX 18, CON 20, INT 12, WIS 12, CHA 10; AL: NE; SKILLS: Spot +15, Wilderness Lore +10, Listen +10, Jump +8; FEATS: Improved Initiative, Track, Alertness.

Garm is the mighty dog that serves both as the Lady Hel's pet and the guardian of Niflheim. Very little gets past his keen senses. All mortals and a few lesser gods over the years who have tried to enter Hel's demesne without her leave have become permanent residents of the dread realm due to his ferocity. He is rarely away from the gate, though sometimes Hel will send him on an errand. If he is absent, a large pack (15 + 3d6) of Worgs will take his place. There is a 10% chance that he will be encountered with a standard-sized pack (6-11) of Worgs since these creatures worship him as a "god."

Garm is one of the greater monsters of the mythos. Such creatures would never be encountered by mortal minions and are a huge challenge for Lesser Gods. Creatures like Garm face a destiny at Ragnarok and, thus, should not be randomly encountered. Such meetings should always be deliberately planned as part of a high-level or epic, saga-changing quest. Garm is the least of the "Big Three" monsters. Both Fenris and Jormungander are more powerful.

Vellbaum

9th Level Cleric; SZ: Medium (Humanoid)
 HD: 9d8+18; HP: 72; INIT: +1 (+1 Dex);
 SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 17 (+1 Dex, +6 Armor)
 ATK: Heavy Mace +8/+3 melee (1d8+2);
 FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5ft; SV: Fort +10,
 Ref +4, Will +10; ABILITIES: Str 12, Dex
 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14; AL: LG;
 SKILLS: Diplomacy 16, Heal 15, Knowledge:
 Arcana 8, Knowledge: Nature 13, Scribe 8;
 FEATS: Combat Casting, Endurance, Great
 Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill
 Focus: Diplomacy; SPECIAL: Turn Undead;
 SPELLS: Domains - Law and Magic, Spells
 per Day - (0) 6, (1st) 5+1, (2nd) 5+1, (3rd)
 4+1, (4th) 3+1, (5th) 1+

Vellbaum is the High Priest of Uppsala and is totally dedicated to the gods in general and Odin in particular. He is quite literal in his belief in Odin's will (as he sees it) but is not nearly as dogmatic as the High Patriarch of the Romani.

Vellbaum sees himself as the greatest figure in the Northern Kingdom with the King merely muscle and sinew to be used in secular affairs. He is growing concerned with the menace from the East, having read disturbing signs and portents. To this end he is even willing to approach the High Patriarch for an alliance (as long as the Romani consent to being junior partners).

As befitting his station, Vellbaum has more access to magic than most. He wears a +1 Breastplate and wields a +1 heavy mace. In addition he possesses one of the four Great Rings of Power (Rings of Elemental Power — only one exists per element). The one worn by Vellbaum is the Ring of Water.

new markets for the procurement of goods not easily acquired at home. When trade fails, raiding parties are sent instead.

A nominal king exists, but he is literally "first among equals" rather than a traditional ruler. Local lords (called "jarls")

run their territory with little interference from Ozlo. The High Priest of Odin is far more meddlesome than is the King. Twice a year, a national Conclave (a meeting of state) is held. The Conclave at the Winter Solstice is held at Ozlo, and the summertime gathering is at Uppsala.

In addition to humans, Trollborn are commonplace in the Northern Kingdom.

Military - The country is poor terrain for cavalry, and horses are rare for planting, much less military use. The seaward jarls maintain many ships for raiding and trading, but an organized navy and naval strategy don't exist. Naval raiders are typically armed with shortspears and bandaxes. They wear padded armor and carry wooden shields. Most are Warriors of between 2nd and 4th Level.

Most common infantry have a small wooden shield and wear a leather cap for protection. Padded armor is the most common type of armor worn. The shortspear and bandaxe are the predominant weapons among the rank and file. Bowmen are rare, but they do exist, comprised mainly of men judged too small to be good melee fighters. Infantry soldiers are a mix of Commoners (40%) and Warriors (60%). The latter range between 1st and 3rd Level. War parties of more than 30 have a 30% chance of being led by a Fighter of 1st to 3rd Level.

Jarls keep an elite bodyguard called Housecarls. Such warriors usually wear chain shirts and conical helms. They wield battleaxes and carry large wooden shields. A jarl will outfit himself as expensively as possible, and it is only among the nobles that swords are commonplace. Housecarls are Warriors of 3rd to 5th Level.

The Western Kingdom

Geography - Warm and pleasant temperatures make the Western Kingdom a land of milk and honey compared to the other countries. Rolling countryside and small forests predominate with mountainous regions on the borders helping form a natural defensive barrier. Rivers are long, navigable, and important in daily life. The plains and rivers have given rise to a goodly number of large settlements compared to most of the other kingdoms. Important walled cites are Paree, Callie, Bardot, and Mulan.

Religion - In this category, the Western Kingdom is at a crossroads in comparison to the others. Throughout much of its history, the gods of the Vanir held sway. This is still true among some conservative nobility and



most of the countryside. The seas and rivers are of great importance to Westerners, and, consequently, Aegir, the God of the Sea, and his wife, Ran, are the most commonly worshipped deities. Frey, Uller, and Freya (though only in her Goddess of Love aspect) are also highly venerated. Clergy are organized on a local and regional level, with priests and priestesses playing a key role in local affairs.

However, the Western Kingdom is a prime target for Northern raiders. Over the years, some Northerners came not to just raid, but also to settle along the coastline, and they brought their own religious views with them. Most Northern raiders follow the more aggressive Aesir (though the Vanir are equally worshipped at home), and the settlers thus brought heavy worship of Odin along with Thor and Tyr.

Far more insidious than the colonizing Northerners (who are not an apostolic lot) is the faith of the Southern Kingdom. The Romani Templars have begun to step up missionary activity recently, a practice they began nearly two decades prior. The Romani heavily proselytize, but have made only a few inroads into the countryside. More important to the Templars is the nobility. Many key nobles have been converted, forcing their serfs into the new faith. The vile Duke de Rhone was the most important noble converted until this very year. Now, the elderly King Corneah has become a convert. What this holds for the future of the kingdom is unknown but of great concern for Westerners.

Culture - Clear class lines divide Western society. At the bottom of the social ladder are the serfs, and their lower-class equivalents in the towns and cities. Slightly above them on the social rung are the tradesmen and professional soldiery of the nobles and towns. Then come the city and court officials, along with the clergy. At the top of the pecking order is the nobility. These are divided into knights (who are landless), Barons, Counts (who rule townships), Dukes and finally the King. Unlike the Northern Kingdom where they are quite populous, no Trollborn live in the Western Kingdom.

The country is primarily an agricultural powerhouse, but guild activity amongst the various tradesmen enlivens most towns. A rising middle class may threaten the existing social order if the world survives that long. Nobles produce nothing but in the arts, and wars among themselves are often considered an art form. Western

Linhelm

8th Level Barbarian: SZ: Medium (Humanoid)
HD: 8d12+16; HP: 73; INI: +3 (+3 Dex);
SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Armor)
ATK: Shortsword +12/+7/+2 melee, +11
ranged (1d8+4), Greatsword +15/+10/+5
melee (2d6+6); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH:
5 ft; SV: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +5;
ABILITIES: Str 18, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 15,
Wis 12, Cha 15; AL: CG; SKILLS: Diplomacy
10, Handle Animal 13, Intimidate 13, Swim 0;
Wilderness Lore 12, Weaponsmithing 12;
FEATS: Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack,
Weapon Focus: Greatsword; SPECIAL: Rage
3/day, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC),
Uncanny Dodge (can't be flanked).

Linhelm is the titular king of the North. Unlike most of his predecessors, he tends to take his job seriously (he does more than force the jarls to accept him as an honored guest so that he can sponge off of them), and is the most effective High King in the last century. This assertiveness has won him grudging respect from most of the jarls but often puts him at odds with the High Priest at Uppsala. Fortunately, both Linhelm and High Priest Vellbaum have been good friends for many years and were so long before ascending to their current positions. Still, each has his own agenda, and Northerners live in fear of the day that these two strong-willed and stubborn men end up on opposite sides of a critical issue.

Linhelm wears chainmail into battle and carries a shortsword, which he will ritualistically hurl during a charge (mimicking Odin). He then relies upon his mighty Greatsword, which is a magical +2 weapon.

nobles are not expansionists, though, preferring to fight each other between harvests rather than conquer new territory beyond the borders of the kingdom.

Military - Each noble lord maintains a small, trusted retinue of men-at-arms. These loyal guards are 1st to 4th Level Warriors

Jac Corneab

6th Level Expert (Merchant)/5th Level Aristocrat/
4th Level Expert (Sailor) SZ: Medium (Human)
HD: 10d6+5d8+48; HP: 118; INIT: +3;
SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Armor)
ATK: Light Mace +12/+7/+2 melee
(1d6+2); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5 ft;
SV: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +11; ABILITIES:
Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha
20; AL: CG; SKILLS: Appraise 18, Bluff 15,
Diplomacy 15, Forgery 15, Gather Information
16, Intimidate 16, Intuit Direction 10,
Profession (Merchant) 17, Profession (Sailing)
14, Speak Language (Southern), Spot 15, Swim
15; FEATS: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Iron
Will, Leadership, Skill Focus: Diplomacy, Skill
Focus: Profession (Merchant), Toughness

Good King Jac is the aging ruler of the Western Kingdom. A former merchant and explorer famous for his journeys on the *Kallipso*, he came to the throne in an unusual fashion. When the previous king died heirless and civil war started to break out, Jac used his popularity and fortune to buy the throne! He proved a capable monarch, but at 50 his mind is fading.

Fearing for his soul in his old age (as a young sailor based in Brest he was a great womanizer and friend to salty seamen and their wicked ways), he has all but handed the keys to the kingdom to Malficus III. The Romani Templars have been given full access to the country, and they are quickly and thoroughly transforming local worship to that of the Southern way. His sole child, Princess Loree, resists this usurping of her country. She is a nationalist who is offended by what the Romani are doing to her people and her culture. What little power the West has left over its own destiny she wields, a dedicated power behind the throne.

In the old days, Jac wore chainmail into battle and wielded a light mace, which he used with extraordinary efficiency. He is still proficient with the weapon, but it seems likely his days on the battlefield are finished.

armed with longswords and large steel shields. They wear studded leather armor and conical helmets. Thirty percent of them are mounted and wear chain shirts instead of studded leather and carry a lance in addition to their longswords.

Most of the armies, though, are composed almost entirely of Commoners. These unfortunate conscripts tag along, contributing little to the cause while absorbing tremendous losses along the front lines. They are typically armed with spears and pitchforks — anything to poke a foe from as far away as possible. Armor and other protection don't exist for them. A small number of this rabble are skilled hunters armed with composite short bows and knives for personal defense (though running is usually more effective) but, again, no armor.

Nobles outfit themselves as expensively as possible, choosing chain mail or a breastplate if they can afford the latter. Every noble rides a mount into battle and, thus, carries a lance. A secondary weapon is a matter of personal choice, and therefore varies from noble to noble.

The Middle Kingdom

Geography - The Middle Kingdom is almost totally isolated from its neighbors despite being at the center of Midgard and sharing borders with the other four kingdoms. This is because the natural barriers of wood, water, and mountain, while not impenetrable, are formidable nonetheless. Inside the Middle Kingdom, virgin forests abound in an almost idyllic physical setting (quite apart from the roughness of its inhabitants). With only scattered plains and clearings, the Middle Kingdom is hardly friendly to either invaders or the formation of large settlements by its inhabitants.

Religion - Only the Aesir are worshipped here, much like the gentler Vanir used to be in the Western Kingdom. Unlike the West, the Romani Temple has not complicated the mix because they have made few inroads. This is partly due to the fact that the Romani do not view modifying Aesir worship (even if they find it barbaric) as being of as high priority as converting those who follow the frivolous Vanir. Moreover, the xenophobia of Middle Kingdomers is not conducive to missionary activity. More than a few Romani Templars have been burned as warnings. Even the Northern traders who have established contacts along the borders do not bring knowledge of the Vanir with them. Thor is the most commonly worshipped god, followed by Odin.

Runic Magic

All gods are proficient in the use of Runes to shape the universe around them. Odin won knowledge of the Runes after tremendous self-sacrifice, losing his eye in the process. There are 24 Runes in all, and each has both a beneficial and a baneful aspect.

Knowledge of a particular Rune enables the user to cast either effect. The Lesser Races cannot cast Runes. However, they do often inscribe them onto objects, believing that there is some benefit to doing so. In order for the Rune to have any real effect, though, it must have been cast by a god.

All gods know one Rune per character level except for Odin, who knows all 24. To determine which ones a deity knows, start with the Greater God in the player's Divine Portfolio. The player and the High Skald alternate choosing one Rune per level up to the character's maximum number. The High Skald picks first.

Lesser Gods choose their Runes from those known by their patrons, having been taught them by the Greater God. To learn Runes, Lesser Gods must make a successful Runecraft Skill check at a DC of 15. Failure indicates that the Rune is presently beyond the character's ability to understand. He or she may try to learn this Rune again only when reaching a new level or if the god has tried and failed to learn all other available Runes.

Once play has begun, the character learns new Runes the same way. When earning a new level, he or she may attempt to learn one new Rune. Lesser God PCs may attempt to learn Runes not known by their patrons once the campaign is underway.

Casting the Runes is an exacting process and can be influenced through the deity's Runic Modifier (see below). A god's Runic Modifier is equal to his or her Intelligence Modifier. Casting a Rune is a standard action and provokes an Attack of Opportunity when done in combat.

The target of a Rune can either be the caster himself or herself or another recipient, willing or otherwise. To target the caster, the god must simply visualize the effect and say the Rune aloud. To affect a willing recipient, the god must trace the Rune on that person. To affect an unwilling target, the Rune must be spoken and hurled by power of will at the recipient. The range for this tactic is five feet per Level of the caster and line of sight. Unless specifically stated otherwise, a Rune can only affect one target at a time.

Unwilling targets can attempt to resist the effects of Runes cast upon them. The base chance for such an attempt is 10 + the God Type Modifier + the Runic Modifier. God Type refers to the deity's status as a Lesser or Greater God. For Lesser Gods, the modifier is +1. Greater Gods have a modifier of +2.

For example, Aesa Lokisdatter attempts to cast the Rune, Nyd, on a foe. To prevent having two points of Constitution stolen from him, the target of the Rune must make a Fortitude Save with the following formula: 10 + 1 (Aesa's God Type Modifier)

+ 6 (her Runic Modifier), making the DC for his saving throw 17. If successful, Aesa's Rune fails. If not, it succeeds and the target loses two points of Constitution for 50 minutes (the duration of the Rune - 10 minutes/per level with Aesa being 5th Level).

Casting Runes requires a tremendous act of willpower, and the gods are limited in the number of times they can summon and focus this kind of energy. A Lesser God can successfully cast only two Runes a day. Greater Gods can cast three. There are two exceptions to this rule. Odin, because he knows all the Runes and understands them better than any of the other gods, can cast five. Also, a Lesser God with Balder as his or her patron can cast three Runes a day. Runes whose effects are successfully resisted do not count against the total number that can be cast. The full effects of the Rune must be invoked and applied for the god to be drained of the energy needed to cast it. However, some Runes allow a Saving Throw for half damage. Successful saves against these Runes are still treated as though the Rune was fully effective and not a failure.

The Runes

Below are brief descriptions of each Rune and the effects of casting them. Each entry contains the name of the Rune, its translation, and the English letter that most approximates its sound, along with a brief definition. The entries also list the beneficial and baneful effects of each Rune. All Runic effects are treated as Spell-like effects for purposes of game play.



Feob (Cattle, F, Moveable Wealth)

Beneficial Effect: Any financial transaction or discovery by a person under the effect of this Rune results in an extra 5%-10% profit. Roll 1d6 + 4 to determine the percentage increase. Explanations of the results include better haggling, purer metal content in coins found, etc.
Baneful Effect: Same as Beneficial but with a corresponding decrease in value instead of the increase.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 10 minutes/Caster Level



Ur (Aurochs, U, Untamed Strength)

Beneficial Effect: The recipient of this Rune gains two points of Strength temporarily.

Baneful Effect: The target loses two points of Strength.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Thorn (Devil, TH, A Fell Rune to overcome or fear)

Beneficial Effect: Characters under the beneficial effects of this Rune enjoy greater proof against harm. All saving throws receive a +1 bonus for the duration of the Rune's effects.

Baneful Effect: Just as Thorn can offer greater protection from harm, it can also make a creature more vulnerable. Those suffering from the baneful effects must make all saving throws with a +1 penalty until the duration expires.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 hour/Caster Level

F *Os* (God, A, A Rune of Enlightenment)

Beneficial Effect: While under the effect of this Rune, the recipient is especially insightful. The character adds +2 to all Knowledge Skills.

Baneful Effect: Os can also be used to block cognitive processes, making it much harder to apply the intellect to problems.

When so affected, the character must subtract -2 from all Knowledge Skills.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 hour/Caster Level

R *Rad* (Riding, R, A journey on horseback)

Beneficial Effect: The caster is able to summon a steed to serve him or her. Upon this Rune having been cast, the nearest unriden horse will come to serve the character. The amount of time it takes for the horse to arrive is completely dependent on its distance from the god casting the Rune, however, the absolute furthest a steed will come is one mile. The horse obeys the summons as quickly as possible. While under the effects of the summons, it will be completely loyal to the god who cast the Rune.

Baneful Effect: The caster may target a single steed of any type. If the Rune is successfully cast, the courser flees (carrying its rider) from the god at top speed in the most convenient direction available, which may take it in a hazardous direction. The steed receives a Will Save to negate the effects, but the throw is made by the mount itself, not its rider.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level, Baneful - 1 round/Caster Level

K *Ken* (Torch, K, Light and Fire)

Beneficial Effect: By inscribing this Rune on an object, the caster calls forth a magical flame that cannot be extinguished by normal means. The flame provides perfect illumination in a 20-foot radius from the object on which the Rune is inscribed.

Baneful Effect: Alternatively, Ken can be used to immediately extinguish any single light source. Normal lights save as usual. A magical light source receives a bonus equal to the level of the caster who created it.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 10 minutes/Caster Level

X *Gyfu* (Gift, G, Gifts for favor and honor)

Beneficial Effect: Unlike other Runes, the effects of this Rune are not immediately invoked. Gyfu is inscribed on an object either in the god's possession or that of a willing recipient. Its magic lays dormant until the object is subsequently given to another person, who will treat the giver as his or her best friend for the duration of the Rune's effect.

Baneful Effect: The baneful application of Gyfu is slightly more sinister. Once again, the Rune is cast on an object. However, this time the owner of the object so inscribed sees it as abhorrent and casts it as far from his or her person as possible. He or she will refuse to retrieve or even to touch the item until the duration of the Rune expires.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 10 minutes/Caster Level

P *Wyn* (Glory, W, Glory in deeds and war)

Beneficial Effect: A creature under the influence of this Rune is more powerful and glorious in all that it does. Target creatures temporarily gain one additional Level and all the benefits (hit points, modifiers, etc.) that accompany it. Note that this Level gain does not grant knowledge or abilities that the creature wouldn't already have. Thus, while a spellcaster would be able to cast more spells than normal, he or she wouldn't have access to new spells the character couldn't previously know.

Baneful Effect: Characters under the baneful effects of Wyn are stripped of some of their glory and, consequently, some of the abilities that accompany it. The baneful effect reduces a character temporarily one Level. All benefits of the character's proper Level are lost until it is restored.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level

N *Hegal* (Hail, H, A powerful force of nature)

Beneficial Effect: Hegal calls upon the power of a storm to affect the surrounding area. Beneficially used, the caster summons a calm shower that provides light to moderate rainfall with all the natural benefits inherent in such. This storm covers a one-mile radius.

Baneful Effect: This application summons a violent storm that produces heavy rain and rock-sized hail. The caster can direct a number of hailstones equal to his or her Level to strike targets in the storm's path. Each stone inflicts 2d6 + 2 points of damage. Once all of the available hail damage is applied, the god can no longer direct their fall, but the storm continues unabated for the duration of the Rune's effect. As with the beneficial option, the storm's radius is one mile.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - None, Baneful - Reflex for half damage

Duration: 10 minutes/Caster Level



Nyd (*Need, N, The need to endure*)

Beneficial Effect: Nyd allows those beneficially affected to endure harm better, granting them a temporary bonus of two points of Constitution.

Baneful Effect: It has the opposite effect on those targeted with its ill effects, causing them to suffer. Such creatures temporarily lose two points of Constitution. Keep in mind that any creature reduced to 0 Constitution is killed.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Is (*Ice, I, The many aspects of winter*)

Beneficial Effect: Those beneficially affected by Is have the aspects of the hardiest of winter creatures. The affected character does not need to make Saving Throws in cold weather (below 40) and must only make them every hour instead of every 10 minutes in frigid weather (below 0 F). Additionally, the creature gains a +3 bonus on all Saving Throws against magical cold-based attacks.

Baneful Effect: The god projects a Ray of Cold that inflicts 1d4 points of damage per Level of the caster.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - Will negates, Baneful - Reflex for half damage

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level, Baneful - Instantaneous



Ger (*Harvest, J, Ever-turning Cycle/Wheel of Life*)

Beneficial Effect: The target has great insight into life and the nature of the universe. He or she is therefore afforded a +2 bonus on Saving Throws against illusions.

Baneful Effect: The true nature of things becomes clouded in an affected individual. He or she must reverse one aspect of the character's alignment. The caster chooses which. Thus, Lawful characters become Chaotic, Evil ones become Good, etc. Characters who are Neutral (NG, NE, LN, or CN) always change the non-neutral aspect of their alignment. True Neutral characters become either Lawful Good or Chaotic Evil at the caster's discretion. This change is temporary and lasts only so long as the duration of the Rune's effect.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 hour/Caster Level



Eoh (*Yew, El, A durable, elastic wood*)

Beneficial Effect: Eoh conveys the advantages of the yew tree. Yew bows were among the best, and the recipient of this Rune's effects receives a +2 bonus on all ranged attacks as the qualities of those bows are imbued within his or her attacks.

Baneful Effect: When targeted with the baneful effects, all of the yew's qualities are stripped from the individual, subjecting him or her to a -2 penalty on all ranged attack rolls.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Peord (*Apple, P, An apple a day keeps the leech away*)

Beneficial Effect: This Rune is inscribed on a piece of fruit. If the fruit is consumed before the duration of the effects expire, the person who eats it heals damage. How much depends on the type of character that consumes the magical apple. Mortals heal 1d10+1 hit points. Gods, who can absorb more of the magic, fare better. Lesser Gods receive 2d10+2 hit points, and Greater Gods heal 3d10+3. **Baneful Effect:** Peord can also be cast on a creature, causing it to suffer as though it had been poisoned. Mortal creatures suffer 3d10+3 points of damage. Gods are a little more immune with Lesser Gods taking 2d10+2 points of damage, and Greater Gods suffering 1d10+1 hp.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level, Baneful - Instantaneous



Eolh (*Defense, Z, Defense and Protection*)

Beneficial Effect: Eolh provides a +2 AC bonus to those under its positive influence.

Baneful Effect: It subtracts 2 from the AC of those it is intended to harm.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Sigil (*Sun, S, The brilliance of the sun*)

Beneficial Effect: The light of the sun blesses the recipient of this Rune's effect. A magical light centered on the target extends in a radius of 60' and offers illumination equal to that of mid-afternoon on a cloudless day.

Baneful Effect: The light of the sun can also cause harm, though. A target creature is Blinded by the brilliance of the sun's power.

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Duration: Beneficial - 10 minutes/Caster Level, Baneful - 1

round/Caster Level



Tiw (*Tyr, T, War and Martial skill*)

Beneficial Effect: Those blessed by Tiw know greatness in hand-to-hand combat. Correspondingly, they gain a +2 bonus on all melee attacks for the duration of the Rune's effects.

Baneful Effect: Characters who are adversely affected have their martial prowess stripped from them and suffer -2 penalty on all melee attacks while under Tiw's influence.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Beorc (*Birch, B, Spring's awakening, Health*)

Beneficial Effect: While under the influence of Beorc, the target is renewed and refreshed as though Spring itself were alive in the creature's body. The target temporarily gains two hit points per Level of the recipient, and these bonus hp are

lost first to any damage the character sustains while so affected.
Baneful Effect: New growth is not always so easy, and a creature affected negatively suffers from the growing pains that often accompany such renewal. The creature is wracked with pain spasms, inflicting two points of Subdual Damage per Level of the recipient.

Saving Throw: Fortitude for half damage

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Eb (*Horse, E, Transportation and Speed*)

Beneficial Effect: The recipient of this Rune's effects is imbued with the speed of a mighty courser. His or her movement rate is temporarily doubled.

Baneful Effect: The target of the baneful effects of Eb is burdened as though he or she were a packhorse overloaded with goods. The character's movement is slowed as if the weight of the equipment he or she is carrying were one level higher than it actually is.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Man (*Man, M, The intellect of humanity over beasts*)

Beneficial Effect: This Rune lifts the intellect of the target creature, granting a +2 bonus to Intelligence for the duration of its effect.

Baneful: It can also be used to drag a character's mind down to the lower level of animals. Creatures so affected suffer a two-point loss to their Intelligence.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Lagu (*Water, L, The Subconscious of Humanity*)

Beneficial Effect: Similar to Man, Lagu stirs at the inner recesses of the mind. Beneficially applied, it raises the target character's Wisdom by two points.

Baneful Effect: As it can make things clear, though, so too can it cloud them. Those struck down by this Rune suffer a -2 penalty to their Wisdom scores.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Ing (*Fertility, NG, Fullness of Life and Sexuality*)

Beneficial Effect: Those under the influence of Ing seem more virile and appealing. They are thus blessed with a +2 bonus to their Charisma scores while so enchanted.

Baneful Effect: Not all are perfect specimens, though, and those cursed by the baneful effects of this Rune are exposed as such. They have a -2 penalty imposed on their Charisma for the duration of the effect.

Saving Throw: Will negates

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level



Daeg (*Day, D, Light to chase away darkness and fear*)

Beneficial: This Rune is a powerful one against undead. When cast it inflicts 1d12 points of damage per Caster Level on any number of undead creatures within the range of its influence. The god chooses how to apply the damage, but only undead creatures can be affected by this use of the Rune.

Baneful Effect: Casting the Rune in this manner causes a blast of righteous light that is stunning to all creatures. The caster may affect a number of creatures equal to his or her Level. Those of a Level less than the caster are knocked unconscious for 1d6 rounds. Those of equal or greater Level than the god, are Stunned for 1 round.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - Reflex for half damage, Baneful - Will negates

Duration: Instantaneous



Ethel (*Homeland, O, The security of one's home*)

Beneficial Effect: Ethel provides added security for those targeted by its beneficial effects. It creates a shield that extends in all directions for a radius of up to one foot per Caster Level. This shield will absorb 1d4 hit points of damage per Level of the caster before it is destroyed. All damage dealt to the god prior to the shield's collapse is absorbed by the shield instead. Once it falls, any damage in excess of the amount required to knock it down is inflicted on the caster. While inside the shield, the god may fight back, but opponents beyond the range of the shield must be attacked with ranged weapons. Opponents inside the range of the shield may ignore it, but they cannot enter within its walls once it has been erected until it is knocked down. The caster may include other characters within the range of the shield, but they suffer from the same restrictions, and if they leave the safety of it, they cannot return until it is dispelled. The caster cannot leave the radius of the shield as it is centered upon him or her. The shield remains in place until destroyed or willed away by the god.

Baneful Effect: Outside of one's home, one can be at the mercy of the elements, and those targeted by the baneful effects of Ethel are so affected. A target creature is treated as though under the effects of extreme cold or extreme heat (caster's choice). He or she suffers the full effects as though actually assaulted by the condition in question. Thus it is possible to get frostbite on a steamy day or suffer from heat exhaustion in the middle of a blizzard.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - None, Baneful - Fortitude negates

Duration: Beneficial - See description, Baneful - 10 minutes/Caster Level



Uller the Huntsman is also revered. The priesthood is hereditary and organized along tribal lines.

Culture - The Middle Kingdom is not a unified entity in a political manner. The society is tribal in its structure, sharing a common language and some cultural habits. Warfare is the favored pastime among the tribes and is indulged frequently both among themselves and with any outside force foolish enough to challenge their territory. Only rarely in history have they moved beyond their borders, and all of these instances were due to overpopulation. Tribes fight invaders as isolated entities unless the opponent is too strong (the tribe got thumped in its first encounter). In this case, the chiefs band together for mutual protection. When tribes join forces an overall commander is appointed among the chiefs by the democratic method of knocking heads together until only one wants (or is able to take) the job. The alliances fragment as soon as the threat has passed. The tribes subsist almost entirely by hunting, gathering, and grazing. Some marginal trading exists among tribes close to the border. It takes a brave merchant to try to penetrate the interior. Most suffer the same fate as the missionaries. Trollborn are uncommon but accepted within the tribal structures. No separate tribe of Trollborn exists.

Military - *Even more warlike than their Northern cousins, each male of the Middle Kingdom is considered a warrior from the time he is able to hold a weapon steady until he is too unsteady with old age to stand on his feet. The vast majority of tribal warriors are armed with battleaxes and small wooden shields. Some (20%) have shortspears. The elite tribal warriors will have great axes and wear cured leather for protection. Younger warriors carry several javelins, a hunting knife, and small wooden shields. These young men are used as skirmishers. Bows are known but are used only for hunting. They are considered too cowardly for combat. The older men are used as reservists and have thrusting spears and shields. Cavalry is rare due to the topography of the land. What little exists is used as mounted scouts and skirmishers. Tribal chiefs are armed and armored as they please, often with goods of high quality purchased outside the borders. Soldiers in the Middle Kingdom are Warriors of 1st through 5th Level, but there is a 10% chance that any war party of 30 or more from the Middle Kingdom will be led by a Barbarian of 1st to 3rd Level. Tribal Chiefs are 4th and 5th Level Barbarians.*

Thurrq

3rd Level Barbarian SZ: Medium (Trollborn) HD: 3d12+6; HP: 34; INTE: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Armor) ATK: Greataxe +7/+2 melee (1d12+3); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5ft; SV: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; ABILITIES: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13; AL: CN; SKILLS: Climb 6, Intimidate 6, Intuit Direction 6, Speak Language (Northern), Wilderness Lore 6; FEATS: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus: Greataxe; SPECIAL: Rage 1/day, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC).

Thurrq is something of an oddity. He is a Trollborn who leads a war band and a mixed one at that. His raw strength, guts, and fearsomeness have won him the spot, inspiring both fear and awe in the men he leads. Thurrq's band dwells near the border of the Northern Kingdom, and they have taken both to raiding their neighbors and beating back Northern attacks (many of which are in retaliation for his own actions). He does sometimes trade with the Northerners, but only when it is a tactically superior strategy to taking what he needs.

In battle, he wields an enormous Greataxe. He has cloven many foes with this giant weapon, and the mere sight of him wielding it has made even the stout Northerners weak in the knees on occasion. He wears leather armor for protection.

Thurrq's war party is made up of 20 other Trollborn and 10 Humans. They are all 3rd Level Warriors armored in leather like their leader. Half of the Trollborn and all of the Humans wield Battleaxes. The remaining Trollborn are armed with shortspears and daggers.

Thurrq and his group should give any party of mortals of low- to mid-level a good challenge. If the PCs need to go to the Middle Kingdom (or through it), Thurrq makes a fine obstacle. Alternatively, if the party can convince him to cooperate with them, he would make a powerful ally.

Thurgg (continued)

Despite his fierceness, Thurgg is not without philosophy. Like many Trollborn, he is sterile, and so are many of his Trollborn followers. While it saddens him, he finds little point in fighting inevitable doom. Thus, he throws himself into the heat of battle knowing that it will one day undo him. Yet, as he has nothing he considers worth living for, he is determined to embrace his fate and leave the world with courage and honor. At least this way, he figures, there will be a seat for him in Valhalla.

Yog-Awass

5th Level Sorcerer: SZ: Medium (Humanoid)
HD: 5d4+10; HP: 28; INIT: +3 (+3 Dex);
SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 13 (+3 Dex) ATK: Dagger
+4 melee, +5 ranged (1d4+2); FACE: 5 ft x
5 ft; REACH: 5 ft; SV: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will
+6; ABILITIES: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18,
Wis 12, Cha 12; AL: CN; SKILLS: Alchemy
10, Concentration 9, Knowledge: Arcana 12,
Scribe 9, Spellcraft 10, Profession (Apothecary) 8,
Speak Language (Northern), Speak Language
(Western), Speak Language (Southern), Speak
Language (Middle); FEATS: Combat Casting,
Iron Will; SPECIAL: Summon Familiar, Scribe
Scroll; SPELLS: (1st) Change Self, Charm Person,
Comprehend Languages, Mage Armor, Magic
Missile, Mount, Protection from Law, Shield,
(2nd) Cat's Grace, Detect Thoughts, Invisibility,
See Invisibility, (3rd) Tongues, Fireball.

The Eastern Kingdom

Geography - The terrain of the Eastern Kingdom is remarkably open and bleak. It consists of endless steppes and deserts and is arid and dry except for a few rivers. Large cities abound, mostly on the waterways and coastline. Half the population is nomadic and the other half urban, and rarely do they interact. Only through the machinations of a powerful local lord does this occur. Land near the cities is cultivated for its use while fertile soil just a few miles away is left untouched.

Religion - The Eastern Kingdom is unique in its religious views. For this aspect of its culture the Easterners are branded as barbarians by all other peoples in Midgard. They pay no heed to the gods and goddesses of the Aesir and Vanir. The only national cults are those of Death (Hel) and the Trickster (Loki). The universality of those two gods within the Eastern borders, however, does not set them above local customs. Each city-state and tribe of nomads has its local deities, mostly heroes and former kings or priests. Wealthy families who are considered important enough are allowed worship of key ancestors. Despite not worshipping a deity as such, priests and priestesses (women are quite equal in this society) wield real power. Spells are granted from the primordial stuff of chaos itself. The Easterners view other faiths as false and actively contain the spread of such ideology within their borders. The growth of the Eastern Faith is an indication of the End of Times.

Culture - If possible, the Easterners are even more xenophobic than the people of the Middle Kingdom. This is not due to isolationism, however. Rather, it is engendered by a feeling of superiority over the other people of Midgard.

Each city is ruled by a local king and each nomadic tribe by its own khan. These individuals are complete autocrats so far as authority is concerned. The cities and tribes do not interact socially, though they do trade. Civil strife is rare, despite the fragmented power structure. All Easterners are "of the same blood" when compared to outsiders.

Some outside trade is permitted in trading colonies along the borders and in specially designated areas of the port cities. A foreigner found elsewhere risks a quick death. Trollborn are rare but accepted in the Eastern Kingdom. A small tribe comprised solely of Trollborn exists and is renowned for its warlike ability.



An amazing level of culture exists in the cities, rivaled only by those of the Southern Kingdom. In terms of architectural beauty, the structures of the East are without peer.

Easterners have a keen sense of their own identity and destiny. Prophecy speaks of an Imam who will unite the tribes and the cities. This Great Khan will lead the East in a holy war to purge Midgard of lesser peoples (everyone else).

Military - The cultural split between nomads and urbanites has naturally created two distinct military models for the Eastern Kingdom. The nomadic tribes rely almost solely on cavalry forces. Fully 80% of their forces are mounted. These soldiers are mostly (60%) 2nd to 4th Level Warriors armed with javelins and various hand weapons, the scimitar being a favorite. They wear leather armor into battle. The remaining portion is comprised of horseback archers armed with short composite bows, a lot of daring, and little else. There is a 30% chance that any nomadic war party will also contain 1-4 Fighters between 1st and 3rd Level.

The rest of the tribal forces are "bobilar" who ride into battle but fight dismounted. The vast majority of these soldiers are 1st to 3rd Level Warriors armed with short spear, long sword, large wooden shield and leather armor. The others are archers with composite short bow and scimitar.

An Elite Guard of 3rd to 5th Level Fighters ride into battle with the Khans. These fearsome warriors carry lance, scimitar, studded leather, and a small wooden shield. The Khans themselves are typically 5th and 6th Level Fighters and are similarly armed.

For city forces, the principle is reversed. The vast majority of urban defenders are infantry armed as their bobilar counterparts. Infantry soldiers are typically Warriors of 1st to 3rd Level. The cavalry contingent amounts to about 20% of the total urban force and are equipped the same as their tribal cousins. However, there are no horseback archers among the city cavalries, and there is only a 20% chance of encountering a 1st to 3rd Level Fighter among the urbanites. Kings do maintain an elite Palace Guard similar to the Elite Guard of the tribes. The kings themselves, though, are generally Aristocrats and not Fighters.

Across the spectrum, there is a sense of professionalism in the militaries of the Eastern Kingdom that is far superior to the armed mobs of the other countries.

Yog-Awass (continued)

Yog-Awass hails from the East and is designed as an antagonist for player characters of the Lesser Races. Aesa Lokisdottir is his sponsor, and he serves her more faithfully (and more usefully) than any of her other minions. This relationship should allow the Skald to weave together a series of adventures for the Lesser Race characters and their divine patrons featuring these two villains.

Yog-Awass is a master plotter without a country. Though he is Eastern by descent, his ultimate aim is to bring anarchy (chaos in the name of individual freedom) to all. He should be more than a match for a group of low-level characters, and, like his mistress, he prefers to use dupes and minions to accomplish his missions. Thus, he can be defeated, but he is more difficult to kill, making it possible for him to escape only to return to haunt the party in the future. As the characters grow in power, adjust Yog-Awass up to match.

Fiend that he is, Yog-Awass prefers to analyze a situation carefully to determine how best to invoke his schemes of chaos. He thus prefers to hide in the shadows and listen so that he may learn the motivations of the people he intends to victimize. While he relies on spells to hide him while so engaged, he has recently come into the possession of a Cloak of Invisibility, which has greatly aided him in this practice. When he raises the hood, he vanishes just as if he cast the spell, allowing him to move about unseen as he plots his dark missions. In addition, his rat familiar, Asam, frequently assists him in learning others' secrets.

Aesa Lokisdottir

5th Level Rogue: SZ: Medium (Lesser God) HD: 5d6+30; HP: 54; INT: +11 (+7 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); SPD: 30 ft; AC: 21 (+7 Dex, +2 Armor, +2 Natural) ATK: Shortsword +9 melee (1d6+6) Dagger +9 melee, +10 ranged (1d4+6); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5 ft; SV: Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +5; ABILITIES: Str 22, Dex 25, Con 22, Int 22, Wis 21, Cha 24; AL: CE; SKILLS: Balance 8, Bluff 13, Climb 12, Diplomacy 14, Escape Artist 13, Listen 11, Move Silently 15, Open Lock 13, Pick Pocket 14, Read Lips 12, Runicraft 6; Search 12, Sense Motive 13, Spot 11, Swim 6, Tumble 13; FEATS: Ambidexterity, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting; SPECIAL: Sneak Attack +3d6, Evasion (Ex), Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); RUNES: Thorn, Os, Nyd, Eoh, Eolh.

Aesa is one of Loki's children and sponsors Yog-Awass. She makes a good nemesis for the Lesser God player characters over a series of quests. Aesa regularly frequents Midgard disguised as a regal lady to direct her minions and further her father's schemes. She prefers to avoid direct conflict whenever possible, sending devoted human followers and pets to their deaths while making good her escape. Outside of Midgard, she sheds this disguise, wearing leather armor cut in such a way as to totally distract a male opponent. She is featured on this book's cover.

The Southern Kingdom

Geography - The geography of the Southern Kingdom is as full and varied as the West. The primary difference between the two is the mountain chain that effectively divides the Southern Kingdom in half. This feature serves to discourage overland travel (increasing the importance of the sea-lanes) and forces population centers to the coast. Large city-states dominate the coastline, and fertile farmland is encountered as you proceed inland to the slopes. There, some grazing and vineyards (the country is known for its wine) are the main staples.

Religion - The Southern Kingdom is home to a unique system of religious belief: the Romani Temple. Once a land where all gods were honored, the cult of Odin kept growing in importance, especially as the country fragmented (after a vicious century of civil strife) from a unified kingdom to its present city-state arrangement. The Romani Temple gave the people a sense of national identity.

The Temple is devoted to the worship of Odin as All-Father. He is always referred to by that title (and not by name) outside of priestly theological debate. Excepting two others, worship of other gods is prohibited and punishable as heresy (the penalty being death). The other cults that survive are Frigga (as a junior partner to the All-Father but not his equal) and their son, Balder (the Son of God). Balder represents a perfection to which humanity must strive.

The faith is quite missionary, and the Western Kingdom has nearly been won over with the recent conversion of its king. Throughout the country the devout hang signs in their storefronts that read, "Balder Loves You." Like all apostolic faiths, it seeks to make converts of all people. Some progress has been made in this regard in the Islands but none elsewhere. The Temple is now refocusing its energy to stirring up the Northern and Middle Kingdoms against the East in an attempt to foment the foreseen Doomsday Battle. So far, they have had little success.

Culture - The culture of the South is very cosmopolitan. All social life revolves around the city-states. People of the countryside are citizens of one city-state or another, and even a blind, rude peasant takes vicarious pleasure from claiming citizenship in the local urban center. The cities themselves are a mercantile paradise, and trade is abundant both with each other and the other kingdoms. Culture and social life are exported as much as consumer goods (Southern art being famous throughout Midgard). Farming is important only inasmuch as it supports the cities. Trade and craft guilds are the hub on which the country turns.

The Trollborn are a thing of the past here. Any members of this race who enter the Southern Kingdom will find themselves persecuted at best and probably dead if they tarry too long.

Military - The political fragmentation of the country does not promote a great military structure, and, hence, standing armies



are rare. Conflict is largely carried out through trade wars. These struggles are often vicious but hardly as bloody as crossing swords. Every able-bodied person, including women and children, will rally to the defense of a city-state under attack. Citizens can drop rocks or hurl darts (which can be turned out rapidly by the Bull's Eye Guild) quite well. Siege craft is very advanced on both attack and defense.

When an army is fielded it is comprised of 90% infantry. These 1st and 2nd Level Warriors are well equipped by the few Military Guilds. The vast majority of this force is armed with longsword, short sword, conical helm, large metal shield and studded leather armor. Archers with short composite bows, leather armor, and short swords provide support. The small cavalry contingents are outfitted and equipped as the main body infantry but substitute a light lance for the longsword, and have a smaller shield. Officers are comprised of 70% 3rd - 5th Level Warriors and 30% 1st - 3rd Level Fighters. They are decked out in whatever they can afford (the enlisted men's gear is paid for by the guilds).

The Islands

Geography - "The Islands" is a term used to describe the group of two large and one small island off the northwest coast of the Western Kingdom. The Emerald Isles are their official name, or at least it is to the inhabitants. The largest is Erin, which features open and beautiful countryside. Caledon is rocky and forbidding but still picturesque. The smaller isle between them is the Isle of Man and is the center of religious life, binding all of them together. Frequent rain brings a dreary tenor to an otherwise picaresque place. According to legend, the Islands broke off from the Western Kingdom as a result of a misadventure of Thor's.

Religion - The people of the Emerald Isles practice a sect of Vanir worship. The only two deities are Frey and Freya, who are known as the Lord and Lady and are of equal importance. The change in theology goes back to the isolation from the West following the separation. The clerics of the Emerald Isles are Druids, not priests like normal human clerics. The Isle of Man is the seat of Druidic belief and serves as their official training ground. Great standing stones are centers of worship throughout the Islands.

The Romani once tried to invade the Isle of Man, believing that if they cut off the head of the heretical sect, the body would wither. The Templars took the Isle, but enough Druids escaped to rally resistance. The subsequent sack of Romani led to a change in

Aesa Lokisdottir (continued)

While not as cunning as her patron, Loki, she is nevertheless an intelligent opponent. Unlike her father, who is simply jealous of Balder, Aesa is a black-hearted, malicious goddess. Her ultimate goal is destruction, and all of her schemes are aimed at ruining Odin's carefully preserved order. She is charming and well-spoken, but this mask covers an evil person who constantly searches for her next victim.

Aesa is listed here as 5th Level, but she should be of the same level as the PC Lesser Gods so as to be a match for them. Increase her level as appropriate. Remember that she is a Lesser God herself and therefore has all of the Divine Abilities of the PCs.

Loki's daughter possesses a Ring of Charming. This ring allows her to affect humanoid creatures as though they were under the influence of a Charm Monster spell cast by a 7th Level Wizard.

tactics for the latter. In the past three centuries, Romani missionaries have introduced the worship of Balder as "the Son" to go with the Lord and Lady concept. This has been somewhat successful. Long-term plans are to transform worship of the Lord and Lady to the All-Father and Consort.

Culture - Organized along tribal lines, the people of the Islands are united largely by custom and language. There is technically a High King who rules the Emerald Isles, but the title is more an honorific than an actual mandate to rule. The High King has no real authority to command his people to do anything.

Islanders are isolationists with regard to the other kingdoms. Trading is vital to their existence, especially Caledon, which suffers from a lack of arable land. But, for the most part, the people of the Islands could do without the rest of Midgard.

Malficius III

15th Level Aristocrat SZ: Medium (Human) HD: 15d8+15; HP: 90; INIT: +4 (Improved Initiative); SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 10 ATK: Heavy Mace +11/+6/+1 melee (1d8), Staff +11/+6/+1 melee (1d6); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5ft; SV: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +13; ABILITIES: Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18; AL: LG; SKILLS: Bluff 10, Diplomacy 15, Gather Information 6, Handle Animal 4, Innuendo 10, Intimidate 12, Knowledge: Arcana 10, Knowledge: History 7, Knowledge: Nobility and Royalty 5, Knowledge: Religion 13, Ride 5, Sense Motive 8, Spot 7; FEATS: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Skill Focus: Diplomacy, Skill Focus: Knowledge: Religion.

Vilkie

5th Level Bard SZ: Medium (Human) HD: 5d6+5; HP: 27; INIT: +3 (Dex); SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 Armor) ATK: Shortspear +4 melee, +6 ranged (1d8+1), Dagger +4 melee, +6 ranged (1d4+1); FACE: 5 ft x 5 ft; REACH: 5ft; SV: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; ABILITIES: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 17; AL: CN; SKILLS: Diplomacy 10, Gather Information 9, Perform 10, Sense Motive 7, Knowledge: History 9, Profession (Scribe) 6, Speak Language (Northern), Speak Language (Western), Wilderness Lore 4; FEATS: Alertness, Dodge, Expertise, SPECIAL: Bardic Music, Bardic Knowledge; SPELLS PER DAY: (0) 3, (1st) 4, (2nd) 2

Despite being labeled as rustic primitives by others, the songs and stories of the Islands are famous the world over. A bard from the Emerald Isles is sure to get a warm welcome even in the East.

Military - Tribal warriors are brave, but the tribes are not warlike. Skirmishes sometimes happen over points of honor, but rarely over territorial ambitions. Wooden shields of various sizes are used by all troops, but outside of the chiefs (who wear as much gaudy clothing as possible), armor is shunned. The more fanatical troops even go into battle naked except for tattoos and sword belts, to show their bravery. This can be an unnerving sight to outsiders. Younger men are trained as slingers and used as skirmishers. The bulk of the troops in Caledon are armed with javelins and their infamous bastard swords. Caledonian soldiers are usually 1st to 3rd Level Warriors, but there is 20% of encountering a 1st to 3rd Level Barbarian leading the attack.

In Erin, the infantry use short spears and long swords. Cavalry is plentiful in Erin, and javelins and long swords are used by mounted troops. Both infantry and cavalry are comprised of Warriors of 1st through 3rd Level. There is only a 10% chance, though, of encountering a Fighter of 1st to 3rd Level with the war group.

Even though the chariot became outdated as military technology centuries ago, they are still the primary battlefield transport for chieftains and War Druids on all three islands.

Running a Campaign

The rest of Part 2 concerns itself with the mechanics of running a Ragnarok campaign. Most of this information is for the Skald's benefit, but there is nothing here players should be restricted from reading.

Getting Started

The campaign begins in the "Wolf Time," the period just before Ragnarok. Odin is troubled by sinister visions he received from Mimir's Well, yet he is not able to fully understand them or what they mean for the future. Consequently, the Lesser Gods and their mortal minions are being assigned quests by their patrons designed to stave off Ragnarok — the Fatal Destiny of Odin's vision. The players control the gods and mortals whose job it is to struggle against the inevitability of the onset of the End of Days.



High Skalds can effectively customize their campaigns with the players controlling weak mortals or minor deities. This allows the Skald the option of starting the characters off at mid-level (playing gods) or in the typical low-level fashion (as mortals). Most Skalds will find that a good mix between the two making full use of the Divine Portfolio works best since the players can then face a variety of different challenges. The exact mix of adventures is up to the mood of the High Skald and his or her players, but most campaigns run well with a 70%-30% mix between divine and mortal focus. The ability to actually play one of the Greater Gods also exists, but such occurrences are best left for truly great, mythos-related, high-level adventures.

Bear in mind that Lesser Gods are themselves powerful characters. A 5th Level god with average hit points and a Constitution score of 22 (low average) is, with all of his or her Divine Abilities, roughly a CR 8 creature. And that's before you start adding the melee and ranged attack bonuses from Strength and Dexterity scores in the 20's, not to mention the Armor Class and Initiative bonuses. Thus, if you were using these characters (5th Level Lesser Gods) as monsters in a standard adventure, three of them would make a suitable challenge for a party of 11th Level adventurers. If there were four gods, the party would have to be 12th Level. The gods are powerful indeed, and Skalds should keep that in mind when determining exactly what sorts of challenges they wish to have their players' characters face.

Fate Points

Throughout the course of each adventure, the High Skald scores the players based on the performance of their characters and the overall success of their missions. These are called Fate Points, and they are used to track the onset of Ragnarok. The campaign begins with three Fate Points, and the actions of the PCs add or subtract points from this total. If the total number of Fate Points in the campaign ever falls below zero, the campaign ends as Ragnarok begins. Because the tone of the setting is fatalistic, failure is punished more than success is rewarded. Remember: the characters are struggling to prevent the End of Time, a task that, according to the mythos, is impossible. A schedule for the assignment of Fate Points is listed in "Table 2-1: Fate Points."

Malficius III (continued)

Malficius III is the reigning High Patriarch of the Romani Temple. As such, he considers himself the "All-Father's" Vicar on Midgard and acts accordingly. Heavy-handed but fair, he is the ultimate politician. He ascended quickly through the Temple hierarchy through glad-handing, carefully placed bribes, and the occasional elimination of his rivals.

Malficius is fanatically dedicated to the cause of spreading the Southern religion. He and Vellbaum are archenemies despite serving the same god (though certainly neither sees it that way). There have been rumors of Malficius raising a religious crusade to conquer the heathens with the sword if the Romani cannot do so with their faith. Such rumors are but idle gossip thus far, though. There are some who claim it will never happen because Malficius, though crafty and fanatical, has no stomach for that sort of bloodshed. Others claim he does not yet have enough influence to persuade the Temple's allies in the West and South to provide the soldiers and goods such an effort would require.

Malficius is, in many ways, a typical bookish scholar. He has just published his first work: a book prophesying the ultimate struggle of good and evil and the coming of The One called The World Tomorrow. Those of the North and Middle Kingdoms may hate him, and the people of the Islands and the West may lament what he is attempting to do to their faiths, but one thing is certain: Malficius' influence is spreading rapidly. He is on a course to become the most powerful man in the world.

Divinity Points

Divinity Points are most important to Lesser Gods because once spent, they are usually gone. However, they can be earned back (albeit at a very slow rate) through successful prevention of Ragnarok. Every time



Vilkie (continued)

Vilkie is a wandering bard from the Islands, who has acquired a certain measure of renown. He is welcomed equally in the halls of a great jarl or the common home of a bondsman. He travels light, but is quite capable of singing for his supper.

He is an incurable gossip and is quite incapable of resisting the urge to find out everything he can about the local goings-on. He is no less forthcoming with information he has heard from elsewhere and passes it along to any who are interested. In fact, he loves to weave interesting tidbits into his songs. That said, he does have the good sense to keep his mouth shut when in the presence of any who would take offense.

Vilkie is an excellent character to use as a source of information. He always seems to know what is going on, enjoys passing such intelligence along, and is quick with a song or a poem to entertain any who wish to listen. His stories of the legends of the Islands are oft-requested, even in the Southern Kingdom where they are generally viewed as sacrilege. His travels take him far and wide, so it is nearly always reasonable for player characters to encounter him wherever they may travel in Midgard. Skalds may use him as a recurring informant for both divine and mortal characters.

Vilkie plays drums and horns, preferring to make loud, martial music. He is equally good at a quiet poem, however. When travelling, he wears hide armor and carries a dagger in addition to his spear.

an increment of five Fate Points is reached for the campaign, all deities that survive the quest receive one Divinity Point. As mentioned above, the campaign begins with three Fate Points. When the players, through the success of their characters, manage to bump it up to five points, each Lesser God PC gets a Divinity Point as a reward. If they somehow manage to get it up to 10 Fate Points, they will receive another Divinity Point.

However, there is one limitation. Players only receive the Divinity Point for their characters passing a milestone once. They can't do it multiple times. For instance, through the successful completion of a Mortal Quest and then a Lesser God Quest, the players get the Fate Points of their campaign up to six. Each Lesser God PC receives one Divinity Point. On the next quest, though, one of the PC gods is "killed" in Nidavellir, causing a two-point loss to the campaign's Fate Point total, which reduces it to four. Despite this setback, the players successfully complete the quest, earning another two Fate Points and kicking the total back up to six. They do not receive another Divinity Point, though, because they have already gotten one for passing the five-point milestone. To earn another Divinity Point, they will have to be successful enough to raise the Fate Points total to 10.

Remember that only Lesser Gods are awarded Divinity Points. Mortal characters do not receive them, and Greater Gods don't need them since they always have one for use on a quest. Mortals can earn Divinity Points for their patron, however (the PC Lesser God in the Divine Portfolio).

Designing Adventures

Role-playing in the world of Norse mythology should have a different feel than the typical fantasy RPG. The adventures in which the characters participate are epic in scope, and the fate of the world literally hinges upon their success.

Adventures in Ragnarok are referred to as "quests." A quest is directed toward a higher goal. It is not a dungeon crawl. The characters do not encounter a dragon at the center of the maze they've been exploring. They go on a quest specifically to slay the dragon that abducted the jarl's daughter. They do not find a magical amulet in a treasure hoard. They attempt to recover the Amulet of Command before it falls into the hands of the Fire Giants.

Everything the PCs do has great importance in the grand scheme of things. Divine characters are at the center of the coming struggle and mortal ones do their bidding. Thus, each element of a quest should have some purpose in the grander scheme of staving off Ragnarok. Don't have the players explore a dungeon unless there is some



reason to do so. For example, they might attempt to plunder the home of a crafty Dwarf if he has hidden the key to the next part of the quest within it.

Further, the infamous "Monty Haul" dungeon, dripping with magic items and riches for the plucking of intrepid adventurers, should not exist. Magic items are especially rare and precious things. A mortal getting a +1 weapon is an exceptional event. A +2 weapon in such hands is a story about which to write a saga. And the weapon is sure to cause as much harm as good to its owner since others will covet it. Even among the Lesser Gods, magic items simply do not abound. Many of the wondrous items of the mythos are not even weapons. The Gjallar-horn of Heimdal is a prime example.

Every adventure should have a justification for embarking on it. It should have both a clear beginning and a resolution. Clichéd starts like meeting in a tavern or answering a call for mercenaries really aren't appropriate for this setting. Mortal minions will be acting on the visions or messages sent by the Lesser Gods or their priests. The Lesser Gods will be given quests directly by their patron or even Odin. There can be exceptions to the latter as long as a consistent frame of reference is kept. For example, Heimdal has spied a wyvern in the outer reaches of Asgard. Joking with the younger gods (the PCs), he recommends they can get some practice by tracking the beast down. The players do so, but they find more than a wandering monster. The Dark Elves have opened a portal to the other realms from Svartalfheim and are sending through creatures to cause chaos and woe. Investigating further, the players peel back the layers until they discover that a simple dragon hunt leads to a mystery spanning the Nine Worlds.

Monsters

For the most part, there are few restrictions placed on the monstrous creatures that may be encountered. Overzealous Christian missionaries destroyed much of the Norse culture, especially its religion, and only a few written myths survive. The rest must be extrapolated. Individual Skalds must therefore decide what creatures the gods and their minions may encounter. There are nine worlds in the Norse mythos, and plenty of room exists for tailoring the beings encountered therein.

Chariots

A chariot is pulled by two animals (usually horses, but this may vary for gods). The chariot moves at the speed of its beasts with the extra weight of its chassis being compensated for by the extra animal. If one animal is killed, the chariot's speed is reduced by one-third, and the driver must Cut the Trace (DC 15) or the chariot will crash. If a crash occurs, all occupants must make a Jump check against a DC of 12 or take 1d6 damage as they are thrown from the wreckage.

In combat, a successful "Fighting from Chariot" check reduces the moving mount penalty by half and adds a damage modifier of +1 due to the more stable platform of the chariot.

Table 2-1: Fate Points

Completion of Mortal Minion Quest:	+1
Death of a Mortal Minion:	-1
Failure of a Mortal Quest:	-2
Completion of a Lesser God Quest:	+2
Temporary Death of a Lesser God:*	-2
Permanent Death of a Lesser God:*	-5
Failure of a Lesser God Quest:	-3
Completion of a Greater God Quest:	+3
Temporary Death of a Greater God:*	-5
Permanent Death of a Greater God:*	-10
Failure of a Greater God Mission:	-5

* Temporary Death means the god was killed on any world but Asgard or Vanabeim. The god is not truly dead on these worlds and must simply heal his or her wounds. Permanent Death means that the god was killed in Asgard or Vanabeim. Divine death is permanent on these worlds and is a cataclysmic event.



Optional Rule: Fortune and Glory

Skalds who wish to give mortal PCs more lasting playability can use this optional rule to circumvent the mortal characters' prohibition from gaining and using Divinity Points. As they complete tasks and overcome challenges in adventures, mortals acquire Fortune Points. When the character acquires 100 Fortune Points, he or she receives 1 Glory Point, which can be spent just like a Divinity Point.

Fortune is gained or lost subject to the provisions of the following table and the discretion of the Skald, who always has the final say in the matter.

Slay enemy in single combat	2x Challenge Rating
Flee from personal combat	the CR of the foe
Loot gold per quest	2 x 100 gp value
Fulfill an Oath	2
Break an Oath	-5
Complete a Quest	1
Fail to complete a Quest	-2
Successful Prayer	2

Fleeing from a combat after swords (or axes or whatever) have been crossed will merit the negative penalty regardless of circumstances. Remember: the attitude toward death is different in these times. An heroic death got you into Valhalla. Likewise, in a day before written contracts became a lawyer's dream, giving your word was sacred.

Quest Seeds

Listed below are several ideas for suitable adventures for your Ragnarok campaign. Each idea lists the basic type of character involved (mortal, Lesser God, Greater God), the goal of the quest, a setup (a plot hook to get you started), and any other information that may be necessary to get you going. They do not provide antagonists, monsters, or Level recommendations so that you may customize the ideas to your own campaign.

Battle of Wits

Characters: Lesser Gods

Goal: Outwit Loki

Setup: In the great hall of Gladsheim, one of the gods became drunk and boasted that he or she could face a challenge issued by any of the other gods. Most dismissed the drunken claim (or acknowledged that it was true, depending upon who the patron is), but Loki saw an opportunity to cause some mischief and perhaps disgrace a rival. He accepted the invitation, but, when the god prepared for battle, Loki countered saying that the challenge had not been specified and that he chose not to fight. Instead, he made a mental challenge. He bid the god brew an ale with no taste that could satisfy even Thor's great thirst (or, if Thor is the god in question, Odin's). The challenged god has one cycle of the moon to complete the task.

There are several ways to handle getting the players involved. You can choose to have one of the PCs have made the boast, make it one of the PC's patrons, or even up the stakes of this quest and allow the players to use their Greater God characters (with one of them as the accused). If it's a patron god who is under the thumb of Loki's challenge, he or she is perplexed and unable to arrive at any conclusion. He or she begs the PCs to help.

How the characters go about solving the riddle is their own business. You could have them drink from Mimir's Well to receive a vision that would reveal the answer, or they could travel to one of the other Nine Worlds seeking advice. Perhaps a wizened Elf in Alfheim or a crafty Dwarf in Nidavellir has the answer they seek. Next have them travel to other worlds to gain the ingredients they need to brew the ale with each item being increasingly difficult to obtain. Finally, they should arrive back in Asgard just in time to foil Loki's plans.

This quest is largely an intellectual one so you could change the solution to realizing that the challenge itself is a trick. Perhaps the elixir the characters seek is some perfectly ordinary drink such as water. Also, there is no need for them to be involved in combat unless you wish it. While you could have the ingredients guarded by savage monsters, you could just as effectively have them located in impossible to reach locations or owned by creatures who will only sell them for exacting prices (such as a Dwarf looking for a human wife or a Giant seeking a boon from Asgard).



Remember too that failure will cost the party Fate Points. Just because there are no epic battles to be fought in this adventure does not make it any less important in the grand scheme of things. If the characters cannot solve the riddle, it is a sure sign that the gods' influence over the universe is weakening.

Fire at Uppsala

Characters: Mortals

Goal: Prevent the Romani Templars from burning the Temple of Uppsala

Setup: High Priest Vellbaum (see sidebar) is attempting to forge a working alliance with the Romani to combat the scourge of the East. The Romani have ideas of their own about the conversion of the Northern people to the Southern faith, though, and see this as an opportunity to get a firm foothold in the Northern Kingdom. The alliance is sabotaged by Yog-Awass (see his aidebar), who acts as Vellbaum's agent to the Romani and spreads lies on both sides.

There are a number of ways to get the players involved in this quest. They could be working for Vellbaum, who wants the Romani agents investigated to make sure they are not plotting treachery. They could also be working for King Linhelm (see his sidebar), who suspects Vellbaum of being up to something that isn't in the kingdom's best interest. In this case, they'll probably stumble onto the Romani plot in the course of spying on Vellbaum. They could also be acting on the behest of one of their patron gods (that is, one of the players' Lesser God character), who is concerned about talks between Vellbaum and the Romani or who has noticed that the vile Yog-Awass is somehow involved. This last is an especially good hook if the players Lesser Gods have dealt with Aesa Lokisdottir (see her sidebar) in the past.

Regardless of how they get involved, what the PCs need to discover is this: Yog-Awass is deliberately misrepresenting each side to the other. He has helped to bring them together, and now he is creating chaos between them. He tells each representative that the other sees himself as in charge of the alliance and sees the other his tool. As the frustrations and anger mount, Yog-Awass stirs the pot until both sides are more interested in going to war with each other than in forming an alliance against the East. In the end, he convinces the Romani

Table 3-1: Benefits of Patronage

Die Roll	Benefit Bestowed
1	Treat one spell as though the caster were one level higher for the duration of the battle (if the character does not cast spells, treat this as a roll of 2-3)
2-3	+1 to Armor Class for the duration of the battle
4-5	Take one extra action for the duration of the battle
6	Maximum damage on all attacks or spell effects for the duration of the battle

Table 3-2: Prayer Modifiers

+1	if praying at a temple, church, or other holy area
+1	if a priest or priestess is present
+1	if the character has slain an "enemy" within 24 hours
+1	if the character has been granted a "vision" of the god
-1	the character has acted out of alignment since the last Prayer attempt



Table 3-3: Benefits of Prayer

Die Roll	Benefit Bestowed
1-2	+1 on all FORT saves
3-4	+1 on all WILL saves
5-6	+1 on all REF saves

cardinal with whom he is dealing that Vellbaum sees himself as above the Southerners and that he plans infect their people with the "true faith" of Northern worship. Deeming not only him dangerous but the entire Northern faith as well, the Romani plot to murder Vellbaum and burn the Temple of Uppsala to the ground.

By the time the PCs get involved, Yog-Awass should be well along into his machinations. The potential alliance is already fraying at the seams and neither side trusts the other. The characters must uncover the plot to burn the temple before it can be set into motion. If they can expose Yog-Awass as the true villain, so much the better, but the primary goal is to preserve the Northern faith and its temple as wholly as possible.

You should give Yog-Awass several minions with which to work. As this adventure is largely a political intrigue, you'll want to keep the players running down a few blind alleys as they try to discover what's happening. Yog-Awass will try to have them killed as soon as he suspects them of the remotest possibility of interference, so you'll have some action to throw at them as well. Try to keep the tension up so that the players realize the awful truth at the last possible moment.

The Monsters of Svartalfheim

Characters: Lesser Gods

Goal: Stop the Dark Elves from Unleashing Chaos on Midgard

Setup: Several villages and some small towns have been overrun and completely destroyed by rampaging mon-

sters (see below). War parties sent by the jarls have either been unable to track these creatures down, or, worse, found them and been completely wiped out. The people have prayed to the gods for deliverance.

You can involve the PCs by having them assigned the task of sorting out this mystery by their patrons. Alternatively, the mortal characters in the players' Divine Portfolios could pray to their patrons for succor, allowing the PCs to respond on their own.

You need to start by choosing a suitable monster for the adventure. It should be one that can wreak all sorts of havoc on mere mortals (particularly if there are several monsters involved) and will make a good challenge for the Lesser Gods in your campaign. Obviously, the more powerful your PCs are, the more deadly will be the monster you choose (at least to the mortals seeking relief). The monster in question should, however, be a little less powerful than the PCs so that you can reasonably throw a number of them at the gods.

Once you've decided on a monster, the players will have to go to Midgard to investigate the attacks. Lay down as many clues as you like, but eventually they should come upon a village just as an attack occurs. The characters should be able to see a portal open out of which the monsters will surge to attack the town. Once the creatures are defeated, it will be up to the PCs to figure out how to follow the trail back. Whatever means you devise for them, the path leads back to Svartalfheim.

Here, a powerful Dark Elf wizard is summoning the monsters and sending them through a dimensional gate to Midgard to cause chaos and woe. This wizard is being manipulated by the villainous Aesa Lokisdottir in disguise. She wears the guise of a Dark Elf and acts as the consort of the elfin wizard. The characters will have to put a stop to the wizard's plan, fighting through his minions and some more of the monsters in the process. When exposed for who she truly is, Aesa will flee the scene, preferring to wreak mischief elsewhere.

This adventure is a fairly straightforward bug hunt. While there is some mystery involved, it's mainly about the action. It makes a good quest to use after a particularly cerebral adventure or when your players are craving some straight up monster-bashing.



The Theft of Heidrun

Characters: Greater Gods

Goal: Recover the stolen goat, Heidrun

Setup: Late at night, after the great feast in the Hall of Heroes, the black-hearted Fire Giant, Surl, snuck into Asgard and stole the magical goat Heidrun, whose teats provide the sacred wine, mead, to the gods. The deed was discovered before it was completed, but by the time the alarm could be raised, Surl was already well out onto the sea en route to Muspelheim. Odin has ordered that this offense be punished and the sacred goat returned to its proper place.

The players will be playing their Greater Gods in this adventure since the honor of Asgard could not be defended if minions were sent to accomplish this quest. If one of your players has Hel in his or her Divine Portfolio, you'll have to make some adjustments to this adventure (see below).

Surl is easily identified as a Fire Giant before he escapes, and his path across the great sea makes it obvious where he will go: Muspelheim. Surl is easy to track, but the path ends at a small (for giants that is) house, which is populated by as many Fire Giants as there are PCs. They know where Surl is, but refuse to help gods. This encounter should escalate into a fight. Assuming the PCs win, the giants will at last give up the information. Surl took the goat to Nifleheim. He's an outcast among the giants, and that's where he lives.

The gods are not welcome in Nifleheim, but few of its denizens have the courage to challenge them. Feel free to cast the characters into a fight to spice things up, but it shouldn't be a terribly great challenge to them. Regardless, Surl is nowhere to be found.

Eventually, Hel takes notice of the incursion into her dread realm, and summons the gods before her. When she learns the nature of their errand, she tells them that she can help, indeed, but her assistance comes with a price. The gods will have to negotiate with her until she is satisfied by what they offer her. Whatever you allow, it should cost the characters dearly.

At last, she reveals where Surl has hidden the beast. When the player characters at last arrive, they will find the vile Fire Giant with a small army of followers. These are made up of Dark Elves, Dwarves, Hill Giants, and the occasional Fire Giant. The exact composition is up to you, but it should be a sufficiently challenging

Prayer and Benediction

A Lesser God can forcefully utter the name of his or her patron before entering a battle. If the entreaty is heard the patron will bestow some benefit on his or her servant. To entreat his or her patron, the Lesser God makes a Charisma check with a DC of 15. If it is successful, the patron has heard the plea and grants a temporary gift. Roll a d6 and consult "Table 3-1: Benefits of Patronage." This ability may only be attempted once per day.

A Mortal praying to his or her gods is a bit more involved. The gods expected the mortals to live and die like heroes, so a "laundry list" of requests is inappropriate. The Skald has the right to punish such prayers with a -1 penalty on the next die rolled by such a begging character.

However, a serious entreaty of the gods' favor may get their attention. A mortal character can only offer such a powerful prayer once a week. A Charisma Check with a DC of 20 is required. "Table 3-2: Prayer Modifiers" lists ways for the roll to be enhanced. If it is successful, the gods have heard the mortal's prayer and will bestow one of the gifts listed on "Table 3-3: Benefits of Prayer." Roll a d6 to determine which. Such benefits last for one full day. Unsuccessful rolls indicate the character's plea was not heard.

force that the PCs will have difficulty defeating it. They should be able to win if all goes well, but it should definitely be tough. If it becomes obvious that the PCs are going to win, Surl will attempt to kill Heidrun out of spite. If he succeeds, the mission is a failure. When Surl is killed, the rest of his band scatters.



Balder

Level/Class: 15th Level Paladin
 Favored Ability: Wisdom
 Domains: Good, Healing, Law
 Type: Aesir

Special: Balder can attempt to Charm any being as a Supernatural ability. This power is limited to three times a day, but it imposes a -5 modifier to the target's Saving Throw. He is the only Paladin in the mythos and has the full abilities of that Class.

Bragi

Level/Class: 15th Level Bard
 Favored Ability: Charisma
 Domains: Good, Healing, Protection
 Type: Aesir

Frey

Level/Class: 12th Level Fighter/
 6th Level Sorcerer
 Favored Ability: Intelligence
 Domains: Animal, Chaos, Sun
 Type: Vanir

Freya

Level/Class: 12th Level Fighter/
 6th Level Bard
 Favored Ability: Charisma
 Domains: Plant, Travel, War
 Type: Vanir

Special: Freya can Shape Change into a falcon once per day as a Spell-like ability.



Part 3: The Gods *The Greater Gods*

Contained herein are capsule biographies of the major deities of the Norse Mythos. The entries list the god's name, Class and Level, favored Ability, and the domains for Divine Spells granted to their priests. It also indicates whether they are Aesir or Vanir. No game statistics are listed so that players and Skalds may create their own versions of the gods for play. Since each player must choose a patron god for his or her Divine Portfolio, this allows the player to create the character somewhat from scratch while still keeping within the framework for the individual myths.

Obviously, this makes it best if each player has a different patron in his or her Divine Portfolio. Odin represents the High Skald and, thus, is detailed more minutely.

Some of the gods have magical items from the myths detailed in their descriptions while others do not. In most cases, if the item was important to the god's legend (Thor's hammer, for example), it was included.

Otherwise they were left off. Again, this was done to allow players and Skalds to customize the campaign to their tastes. After the Skald and the player have created the Lesser God PC, the Skald should flesh out the Greater God patron, including an appropriate magic item or two. This way, he or she can create a patron tailored to the Lesser God who serves him or her. Skalds should remember that magic is rare in the Norse Mythos and not overload the Greater God with magical trinkets.



alder

Balder is the young son of Odin and Frigga. He is often called "The Beautiful" or "The Good." Balder is the least war-like of the Norse deities, but he is not a coward by any means. Sensitive to the needs

and feelings of those around him, Balder seems to represent what the Norse strove to be but could not attain.

In tune with nature more than the other Aesir, he is given to dreams and omens, though it is often the task of others to interpret them.



ragi

Bragi is another god who, though brave, is not known as a warrior. He is the ultimate Bard, a skald of the highest order. The Norse valued heroic tales of mighty deeds in song far more than written words, and the skalds (and thus Bragi) have an important place in the hierarchy of life.

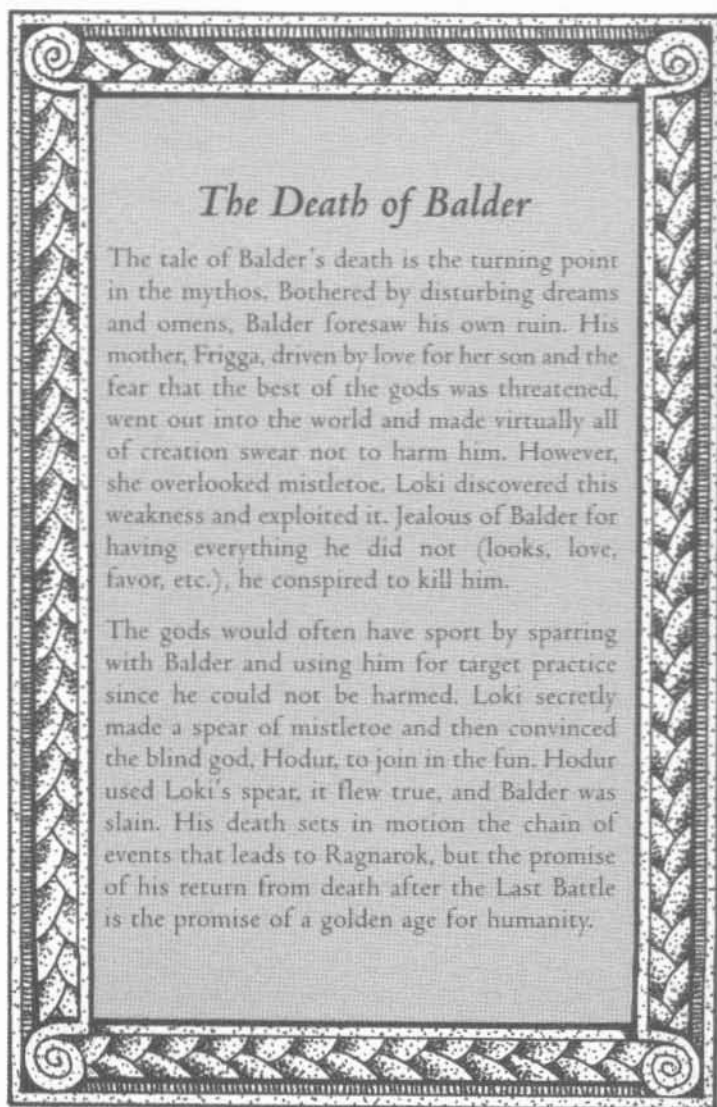
Bragi appears as an older man with a majestic beard. Some stories imply he was raised to god-hood because it is his wife, Idun (to whom Bragi is absolutely devoted), who keeps the Golden Apples that preserve the gods' youth. His counsel is sought (and usually heeded) by all. Bragi uses all Bardic abilities at maximum effect. He is mentioned in most stories, though not prominently.



rey

Frey is one of the Vanir: the more peaceful, earth-oriented deities. He is closely in tune with nature and rather lusty, corresponding to the Green Man of Celtic legend. He is the creator and protector of the Elves. Unlike most Aesir, Frey loves magical trinkets and has quite a few. He has a Folding Boat (Skidbladnir). He also has a pet boar, Golden Bristles, which is a giant

of its species and can be eaten and regenerate overnight as long as one bone is left. His horse, Blodug-Hofi, can teleport with Frey on its back once per day. He is served loyally by a devoted servant god, Skirnir. Frey will unsuccessfully fight the Fire Giant, Surt, at the Last Battle.



The Death of Balder

The tale of Balder's death is the turning point in the mythos. Bothered by disturbing dreams and omens, Balder foresaw his own ruin. His mother, Frigga, driven by love for her son and the fear that the best of the gods was threatened, went out into the world and made virtually all of creation swear not to harm him. However, she overlooked mistletoe. Loki discovered this weakness and exploited it. Jealous of Balder for having everything he did not (looks, love, favor, etc.), he conspired to kill him.

The gods would often have sport by sparring with Balder and using him for target practice since he could not be harmed. Loki secretly made a spear of mistletoe and then convinced the blind god, Hodur, to join in the fun. Hodur used Loki's spear, it flew true, and Balder was slain. His death sets in motion the chain of events that leads to Ragnarok, but the promise of his return from death after the Last Battle is the promise of a golden age for humanity.

of its species and can be eaten and regenerate overnight as long as one bone is left. His horse, Blodug-Hofi, can teleport with Frey on its back once per day. He is served loyally by a devoted servant god, Skirnir. Frey will unsuccessfully fight the Fire Giant, Surt, at the Last Battle.



reya

Freya is Frey's beautiful sister and the daughter of Njord. Together, they bear a more than striking resemblance to the "Lord and Lady" of modern Wiccan belief. Freya is known as the Goddess of Love and

War and can hold her own in either endeavor. Her

Frigga

Level/Class: 15th Level Cleric
Favored Ability: Wisdom
Domains: Healing, Knowledge, Law
Type: Aesir

Special: Frigga favors birds and wears a shawl of hawk feathers, which allows her to assume the shape of any flying creature.

Heimdall

Level/Class: 15th Level Ranger
Favored Ability: Constitution
Domains: Earth, Law, Protection
Type: Aesir

Hel

Level/Class: 15th Level Wizard
(Necromancy)
Favored Ability: Intelligence
Domains: Chaos, Death, Evil
Type: N/A

Loki

Level/Class: 12th Level Wizard
(Conjuration)/8th Level
Rogue
Favored Ability: Intelligence
Domains: Chaos, Destruction,
Trickery
Type: N/A

Special: A powerful wizard, Loki can Shape Change at will and use Suggestion three times a day. The former is a Supernatural ability. The latter is Spell-Like. He wears magical shoes that act both as Boots of Speed and Winged Boots.

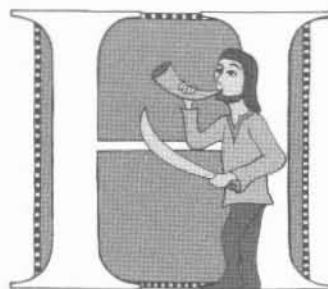
favors are sought by all. She commands half the Valkyries and Einheriar. Her necklace is worth the fortune of the all the Nine Worlds and glows when someone tells a lie in her presence. She rides into battle in a golden chariot pulled by two giant cats.



rigga

Frigga is Odin's wife and thus the Queen of the Gods. While not a "power behind the throne" per se, she is hardly a housewife! Frigga is quite independent and pursues her own agenda. Her

marriage with Odin isn't always amicable, and she maintains her own home in Asgard (called Fensalir). Her favorite mode of travel is her horse, Hofvarpnir, who can travel over water as well as land. She dotes on Balder constantly and is more distrustful of Loki than any of the other gods. Her most famous moment in the mythos is her quest to secure Balder's safety by ensuring all living things swear not to harm him (see "The Death of Balder" sidebar).



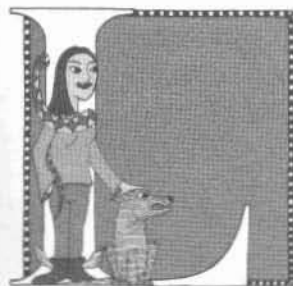
eimdall

Heimdall is the supreme guardian and is worshipped on Midgard by those involved in public safety such as town watchmen. He is even more dour and taciturn than most of the Aesir and is often

mocked by Loki for such seriousness. A loner by nature, he lives near the Asgardian side of the Rainbow Bridge, a post he rarely leaves. A brave warrior, his might is often the first (and last) thing encountered by any intruder. He carries the famous horn, Gjallor, on which he blows various notes to alert the others of intrusions. There is one note that will only be blown once: when he calls the gods and heroes to assemble for the Final Battle, Ragnarok. His horse is also quite famous and an eye-catcher for the ladies. He plays only a minor role in most myths, though he is destined to kill (and be killed by) Loki in the Final Battle.

Hel

Hel is described in the section on Niflheim.



oki

Loki is the most enigmatic figure in the entire mythos. He is blood brother to Odin and has accompanied him and other gods on many adventures. Nonetheless, he is quite self-serving and not trusted by

many. It is his jealousy of the unconditional (and in his eyes unwarranted) love given by all to Balder that will set in motion a chain of events that leads to the Final Battle. Extremely promiscuous, Loki's trysts have spawned many monstrous creatures, most notably the Fenris Wolf and Hel. Loki has the greatest sense of humor among an otherwise dour bunch, but it tends to have a down side with practical jokes. He will side with the giants in the Final Battle and die fighting Heimdal.



din

Odin, called the All-Father and the Gray Wanderer, is the supreme god of the mythos. He is often away from Asgard on subtle adventures. Unlike Thor, who is the proverbial bull in a china shop, Odin

prefers to work behind the scenes in most cases. His wisdom is great but not without gaps. There is much he does not understand, and his quest for knowledge is without equal. He is thus respected and worshipped by scholars as much as kings. He is also very skilled in the art of magic, and Midgardian magicians of all varieties seek his blessings.

He also keeps many useful pets. Two wolves, Freke and Gere (literally, "Greedy" and "Ravenous"), sit by his throne and often accompany him on journeys. His ravens, Hugin and Munin ("Thought" and "Memory"), fly the universe bringing messages and helping him keep track of things. His steed is Sleipnir, a grayish-white, eight-legged horse that can fly.

Odin

Level/Class: 15th Level Wizard (Divination)/
15th Level Fighter

Favored Ability: Wisdom

Domains: Law, Magic, War

Type: Aesir

Special: Odin can inspire Berserker rage in all mortals on his side within 200' as though they had the Barbarian Rage ability. This is an Extraordinary ability. His spear, Grungnir, is a +5 weapon that can be thrown out to 100'. When held aloft, it affects all enemies within 50' as though the Fear spell had been cast by a 15th Level Wizard. His ring, Draupnir, can spawn a non-magical copy of itself every night. Odin gives these rings (10,000 gp value) to those who please him. His powerful throne, Hildskiaff, functions as a Crystal Ball with Clairaudience (unlimited duration) when Odin sits in its seat.

Because he is only available as a High Skald-controlled NPC, Odin is further detailed here complete with all the necessary game statistics.

15th Level Wizard/5th Level Fighter: SZ: Medium (Greater God) HD: 15d4+5d10+160; HP: 233; INIT: +8 (Dex.); SPD: 30 ft.; AC: 29 (+8 Dex, +5 Armor, +1 Shield, +5 Natural) ATK: Shortsword +27/+22/+17 melee, +26 ranged (1d8+16); FACE: 5 ft; REACH: 5 ft; SV: Fort +17, Ref +14, Will +21; ABILITIES: Str 29, Dex 27, Con 27, Int 28, Wis 32, Cha 29; AL: Neutral Good; SKILLS: Intimidate 24, Knowledge: Arcana 34, Knowledge: Religion 32, Scribe 33, Ride 33, Sense Motive 28, Spellcraft 35, Runecraft 35; FEATS: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Weapon Focus: Shortsword, Weapon Specialization: Shortsword, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus: Divination

Odin (continued)

Special Notes: Odin's Ravens function just like traditional Wizard's Familiars and have all abilities thereof. However, they are reflections of Odin's mind and, thus, cannot be harmed. Of course, if anything happens to Odin, the Ravens will suffer as well.

His wolves are treated as Winter Wolves except, of course, that their Alignment is Neutral Good instead of Neutral Evil. They have maximum hit points and an AC of 18.

Odin's steed is treated as a heavy warhorse with maximum hit points and an improved AC of 15. It can move at a rate of 60 ft. on the ground or fly 40 ft. for up to two hours a day.

When he goes to war, Odin wears a fine breastplate and carries a small shield. He normally does not wear them on a daily basis. They do not interfere with his casting ability, nor does the breastplate impair his Dexterity bonus.

Odin casts the Runes more effectively than any other god. When he employs them, they affect their targets as though they had been cast by a 20th Level Wizard. In addition, he can cast five Runes a day instead of the usual three for Greater Gods.



Thor

The son of Odin and Jord is the most famous adventurer in the mythos and the Aesir's greatest giant-killer. He cuts quite a figure with his massive frame and

flaming red hair. Thor's life is one adventure after another, and his exploits are well known to all. He constantly hunts monsters both to prove his mettle and to protect humanity. His

cult is actually more widespread on Midgard than that of Odin. Thor is the god of choice for the common man, while nobles and their ilk favor his father.

Thor is not unintelligent, but neither is he an intellectual. He is certainly wise enough to rely on his strength,

The Fenris Wolf

The Fenris Wolf is one of the most fearsome creatures in the mythos. The product of one of Loki's many trysts, Fenris was a pup when the world was young. The gods feared its growth, though, and, as the world lost its innocence, the Fenris Wolf's behavior grew more mischievous. The gods attempted on numerous occasions to bind it, always telling the wolf that it was a game to test its growing strength. Fenris broke all chains with which the gods attempted to secure it.

At last, his size and occasional viciousness alarmed the gods beyond reason, and they sought to confine him with a magical chain of Dwarven craftsmanship. The wolf sensed that something was amiss and refused the test. So Tyr, who had befriended the Fenris Wolf when it was still a pup and earned its trust, offered his right hand to the beast's jaws. Placing its faith in Tyr's friendship and guarantee, the great wolf consented to the test.

Fenris was unable to break this magical chain, and the gods rejoiced and refused to unbind him. But even then, Tyr, who knew in advance that the gods planned trickery, kept his bargain and did not withdraw his hand. The wolf, enraged at the doublecross, took Tyr's hand as payment.

In the end, Tyr's sacrifice was for naught. The Fenris Wolf grew so large that even the Dwarven chain could no longer contain it. It broke this fetter too and escaped to plague the Nine Worlds until the Last Days of Ragnarok when it will kill Odin himself before falling to Vidar.



which is by far his greatest asset. When he obviously superior to an opponent, he prefers to wield a sturdy battleaxe rather than his traditional hammer. The other gods depend on his prowess a bit too much sometimes. When Thor cannot overcome some obstacle, it is often the cause for great debate and no small panic.

He is fairly well equipped with magic items, mainly of Dwarven manufacture. He often flies through the air in a mighty war chariot pulled by the two great boars, Tanngrisner and Tanngjost. Both can be eaten by Thor (and any companions) and will arise the next day whole as long as one bone remains. At the Final Battle, Thor will slay the vile Midgard Serpent but succumb to the poisonous fumes from the beast.



yr

Noble Tyr has two roles in the mythos. He is the God of Law and of War. His word is his honor, and he expects the same of everyone else. Thus, he is the patron of strict law to the letter. ompassion (or

even justice, perhaps) do not enter into consideration. The end never justifies the means with him.

As the God of War, he drills the heroes and even the gods in the finer points of martial combat. It is Tyr who will lead the army of Asgard into the Final Battle.

Tyr's most prominent part in the myth involves the mighty Fenris Wolf and demonstrates his obsession with the letter of the law (see sidebar). In the Final Battle, he will kill Garm, the Hound of Hel, but will likewise be slain by the beast.



ller

Uller is the son of the goddess, Sif, from a liaison (who may have been a Vanir) before she married Thor. Thor, being a lusty fellow himself, bears no resentment towards the previous tryst and gets along

quite well with his stepson. Uller is the God of Hunters and Archers, and he spends much of his time

Thor

Level/Class: 18th Level Fighter

Favored Ability: Strength

Domains: Air, Strength, Travel

Type: Aesir

Special: Thor's magical belt, Meginharder, adds +2 to his Strength score. His gloves, Jarn Greiper, convey the Feat, Weapon Focus: Warhammer. Thor's hammer is the great wonder of creation. It is a +5 weapon and inflicts 10d8 points of damage. Once per day, the wielder can throw a Lightning Bolt (as the arcane spell) as though cast by a 10th Level Wizard. Using his gloves, Thor can throw the hammer with a range increment of 30 feet. So long as he wears Meginharder, it returns to his hand.

Tyr

Level/Class: 15th Level Fighter

Favored Ability: Constitution

Domains: Law, Protection, War

Type: Aesir

Special: Tyr has the power to inspire Berserker Rage in all Einheriar within 100 yards of him as though they had the Barbarian Rage ability. This power is an Extraordinary ability.

Uller

Level/Class: 15th Level Ranger

Favored Ability: Dexterity

Domains: Earth, Fire, Travel

Type: Vanir

Special: Uller is such a gifted archer that he may re-roll any miss with his great yew bow. This is an Extraordinary ability, but Uller may only employ it once per shot. Additionally, his arrows always inflict a maximum damage.

The Midgard Serpent

The Midgard Serpent, whose name is Jormungander, prowls the depths of the ocean around Midgard. It is another of Loki's offspring, this time with the fell giantess, Angur-Boda. Odin cast the serpent into the ocean where it continually grew in size and menace. Thor, the greatest monster-slayer of the gods, made it his life-long quest to slay the beast. He came close only once while fishing with a giant in uncharted waters. His companion cast out a net and pulled up part of the serpent's body. As Thor prepared to strike, the giant panicked and cut the net, thereby allowing Jormungander to escape. Infuriated, Thor killed his fishing partner instead. Thor will finally kill the creature at Ragnarok, but he will succumb to its poisonous breath.

The Gods and Magic

It should be obvious that most of the gods do not have magical ability, whether arcane or divine. In Norse Mythology, magic is a rare ability among the gods. It is far more common among the bad guys. This does not, however, prevent gods without magical ability from bestowing divine spells on their human priests. The ability to cast spells comes from the raw stuff of Chaos itself. These priests have spell ability as normal, though the nature of the god or goddess they worship has a direct bearing on this ability. Despite that, there is no precedent in the Norse Mythos for resurrection. Therefore, characters may not take any spells that would reincarnate, resurrect, or otherwise bring a character back from the dead. With the exception of the gods' limited immortality, once a character dies, there is no coming back from the afterlife.

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Special Thanks to Jim Lai

outdoors, being uncomfortable when confined in any way. He also has control over weather, especially winter. He is held in high esteem among the gods, and once ruled 10 years in Odin's place.



idar

Vidar is another of Odin's many sons. He is a quiet god not given to boisterous behavior or bragging about his exploits, which are considerable. Vidar never gets mad.

He just gets even. Vidar is

easily the second most renowned giant-slayer among the Aesir. He specializes in unarmed combat and wears a set of magical boots that, when he steps on an opponent's foot, pins the foe to the spot, preventing him from retreating. Once he has them pinned, Vidar pummels his enemies to death. At the Last Battle he will avenge the death of Odin by slaying the Fenris Wolf.



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